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ABSTRACT

This book is based on an 11-day international gathering of Indigenous Elders and educators in 1998. The readings are organized within four areas of Indigenous education and culture: worldview, curriculum change, governance and policies, and spiritual reflections. The entries are: "Circular Vision: Through Native Eyes" (Marie Eshkibok-Trudeau); "When Prison Is a School: Today's Residential Schools" (Paula Mallea); "Misty Lake" (Dale Lakevold, Darrell Racine); "Challenges of Respecting Indigenous World Views in Eurocentric Education" (James Sa'ke'j Youngblood Henderson); "Weaving a World of Respect" (Mayan weaving, resistance, and nonformal education) (Robin June Hood); "A Recent Interview with Agustin Sapon Morales"; "The Cry of the Loon: Mysterious, Mournful, Remembering Place" (Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley); "Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools"; "Culturally Appropriate Healing and Counselling: One Woman's Path Toward Healing" (Brenda Isabel Wastasecoot); "A Sense of Place: Aboriginal Research as Ritual Practice" (Carolyn Kenny); "An Aboriginal Pedagogical Model: Recovering an Aboriginal Pedagogy from the Woodlands Cree" (Cathy Wheaton); "Teaching/Learning across Cultures: Strategies for Success" (Ray Barnhardt); "The 'At-Risk' Student: Defining Experiences" (Melinda Hrechka); "How Plants Can Be Used in the Classroom" (Natalie Tays); "The Preservation of Traditional Plant Lore" (Robin J. Marles); "The Protection of Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights: A Bibliography"; "Ten Years After: Cross Lake Education Authority Local Control of Indian Education" (Rebecca A. Ross); "Two Watershed Speaches of the 1980s and 1990s: Metis History and Status in Canada" (Paul Chartrand); "Working for the Government in Indigenous Education: Strategic Planning in Current Maori Education in New Zealand" (Rawiri Brell); "Education and Renewal in Aboriginal Nations: Highlights of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples" (Marlene Brant Castellano); "Declaration Affirming the Principles for Indigenous Education and Self-Government" (assembled delegates); "Elder's Comments" (Edward Onabigon); and "One More Thing" (anonymous poem). (TD)

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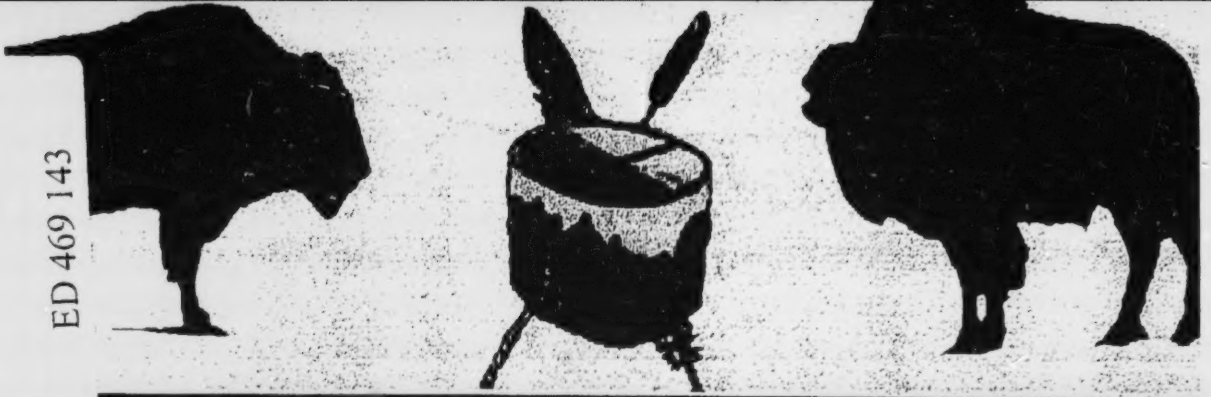

Voice of the Drum

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VOICE OF THE DRUM:

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND CULTURE

EDITED BY ROGER NEIL

KINGFISHER PUBLICATIONS
2000

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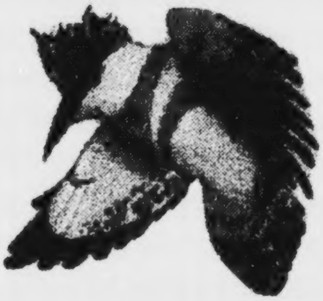

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HOST DRUM DAKOTA HOTAINE
OPENING THE VOICE OF THE DRUM

AUGUSTINE SAPON MORALES:
MAYAN SUN CEREMONY

WORDS OF WISDOM: ELDER EVA MCKAY
AND DR. MARIE BATTISTE

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Dedication

Isaac Beaulieu (1938 - 1999)

This book is dedicated to Elder Isaac Beaulieu. Isaac, together with Marie Battiste and Eva McKay, animated the Summer Institute "Voice of the Drum," at Brandon University, during the summer of 1998.

Isaac is the dear son of Veronique and Noah Beaulieu of Sandy Bay, Manitoba, the loving husband of Eileen, and father of Michel, Micheal, Suzanne, Marcella and Amanda, as well as his traditional family - Veronica, Randy, Fawn and Rayne. Isaac will always be remembered with respect and honour by the participants of the "Voice of the Drum."

Isaac was known for being the most kind, generous and heart-filled person, not only by his attributes but by his passion for music and dance. He inspired many and best demonstrated his commitments to the Pow-wow trail, square dancing circuit, Winter Tribal Days and his duties as Master of Ceremony for many local, regional, national and international events. He always lived and portrayed his abilities in life, and never ceased to make us laugh and to see the everyday humor in life.

Isaac's commitment to education and culture realized many positive changes at the community, provincial, national and international levels. He remains an inspiration to all those who dedicate their lives to the healthy growth of Indigenous education and community.

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I would like to gratefully thank my mentors and Elders who helped in every way: to Antoinette Oberg, James B. Macdonald, Robert Patterson, William Schubert and Anne Lopez-Schubert for "lighting the fire;" to Shingawauk (Dan Pine) of Garden River for teaching me to be discriminating in compassion; to Edward Onabigon for his unalloyed friendship and guidance since the sundance at Heron Bay; to Eva McKay, grand-daughter of Sitting Bull, for her counsel and love; and to Mike Hotaine, for his living example of being a good-hearted drum-keeper of the Dakota tradition.

Special thanks are given to the local Elders who blessed the site of the "Voice of the Drum" in the spring of 1998 at the onset of the year's first lightning storm: Eva McKay (Dakota), Jessie Ross (Cree), Isaac Beaulieu (Ojibway), and Calvin Pompana (Dakota). Their many efforts in naming and structuring the event are deeply appreciated. The formative, creative input of Darryl Racine (Metis) was also vital.

Lastly, my unheralded co-organizer, confidante and lifetime partner, Mary Neil, is given my heartfelt thanks forever. You kept me coherent and on my feet through your good example, love and trust.

Chi Meegwetch (Great thanks!) to you all and those unnamed!

Roger Neil
February 2000

Preface

Greetings! Ho! Bozho! Tansi! Waqaa! Kia Ora! This book reflects, in its content and aim, the spirited will of grassroots educators, true Elders, and wide-ranging scholars.

Most of the authors within these covers participated in the eleven-day international gathering of Indigenous Elders and educators named "Voice of the Drum." The sacred fire burned throughout the event, initiated in a Dakota pipe ceremony led by Elders Eva McKay and Calvin Pompana. The midpoint of the experience was marked by a traditional Mayan Sun ceremony guided by the daykeeper, Agustin Sapon Morales; as well as Maori invocations, gifting and dance in honour of attending organizers and Elders, led by Pita Sharples and Elsie Ellison. The closing of the gathering witnessed a transcendental traditional Lakota hoop-dancing performance by Kevin Locke and final pipe ceremony led by Edward Onabigon, Anishnabe Elder, and Eva McKay, Dakota Elder.

The purposeful weaving of high-level intellectual interchange with spiritual celebration and communion infused many participants with hope and determination. This union of intellectual and spiritual/cultural awareness was nowhere better exemplified than in the daily morning opening remarks and prayers of the animators Marie Battiste, Isaac Beaulieau, and Eva McKay.

Introduction: Voice of the Drum

Roger Neil

These readings have been organized within three areas of Indigenous education and culture: I – Worldview, II – Curriculum Change, and III – Governance and Policies. It is noteworthy that all of the writing herein is contributed by Indigenous persons, or by those who have for many years devotedly worked hand in hand with Indigenous communities, toward the revitalization of traditional practices and approaches.

I WORLDVIEW

- The article "**Circular Vision**," by Marie Eshkibok-Trudeau, offers a rare view into one Anishnabe family's efforts to imbue their daughter's education with traditional understanding. Insights about the Midewiwin Code of Life, the clan system, and the vision quest are shared. There is a breath of the realization of timelessness in the experience that is shared by this Manitoulin Island family. "Circular Vision" adds substance and depth to current research conclusions which have found that active, reciprocal community involvement is an important dimension of research practice in Indigenous education (Dehyle and Swisher, 1997).

Herein, Marie contributes substantially to the existing definition of Indigenous cultural identity in her description of characteristic dimensions of identity development: consistent ceremonial preparation, pre-birth and early years song and language, cradleboard teachings, the dynamics and ethics of discipline, life ethics, personal and community clan interactions, immersion in natural settings, the 'key moments' of the vision quest, sacred Grandmother teachings, lodge songs, fasting and dance. Readers will be grateful to be so thoughtfully reminded of the seven sacred gifts of the Creator: honesty, love, kindness, humility, truth, respect and wisdom.

- In sharp contrast with the harmony of traditional education efforts, is Paula Mallea's critique, **"When Prison is a School – Today's Residential Schools."** Paula directly compares the realities of Aboriginal people, incarcerated in today's prisons, with the preceding processes of residential school. Relying on a current demographic perspective and a brief political history as a background, Paula outlines factors of racism and violations of human rights that became entrenched in the residential schools of Canada. Her description of the residential schools corresponds to that which has been so profoundly documented in the findings in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996).

Paula's justice system experience, as defence counsel, allows her to effectively highlight realities in the legal and penal system. She details courtroom disenfranchisement and prison isolation: frequent banning of Aboriginal languages, customs, dress and food, as well as the adoption of fundamentalist Christian approaches to rehabilitation. Mallea thus makes a credible point that, as they exist, prisons are, in large measure, a "tool of cultural assimilation."

Paula Mallea causally links the often poisonous outcomes of the residential school system with both the high incidence, and the processes, of incarceration of Aboriginal people. Certainly, the assimilationist policies that engineered the residentials are recognized to have required the bare sacrifice of Canada's First Nations' traditional family structures. Recognition of the grotesque synergy between yesterday's residential schools and today's prisons will encourage Canadians to more fairly resolve outstanding Treaties as well as long-term community imbalances.

The personal communications that Darrell Racine and Dale Lakevold have shared with residential school survivors has inspired the play "**Misty Lake**." Elizabeth Bear is the kind of person who, when you reach her by telephone, seems to be immediately present in the room. She and Elizabeth Samuels, among many others, in sharing their stories of survival and healing from the Guy Hill Residential School in Manitoba, have provided the true touchstone for this piece. Like all genuine works of art, this intrinsically inspired play speaks for itself, and has already received provincial and national recognition.

Of the many indelible ideas within "Misty Lake," two can be highlighted here. The first is that residential schools in Canada, through government and church persuasion, coercion, or blunt threat, held Aboriginal children far from their homes for the greatest part of their childhood and youth. Often, the older siblings would feel personally responsible for the well-being of their brothers and sisters (as young as three and four years old) in these institutions. For the first fifty years of the 20th century, the

Canadian death rate in these institutions was 50% (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Kirkness & Selkirk-Bowman, 1992). Imagine the debilitating guilt and depression of the older siblings, should they live through the experience.

A second vital highlight of Misty Lake is that one of the key characters is a Metis reporter who is described to be searchingly receptive to the Dene survivor's memories and feelings; and then comes to understand the spiritual healing that is sometimes achieved by the survivor's direct confrontation and communication of the horror. It is important for us to grasp that the Metis peoples' cultural roots have not been spared the genocidal force of the residential school processes.

One may seek to comprehend the history and present reality of the European colonization of the Americas coarsely or incisively. Coarsely, with a "winner takes all" conceptual framework, one might ignore that early European settlers' survival often depended on the established First Nations' humanity and willingness to share resources. Further, one might ignore the fact that many original territories were held in relative peace from vying European governments with the cooperation and partnership of local Aboriginal communities. One might even ignore that better examples of democratic nation states existed in North America than anywhere in Europe prior to contact. Finally, one might ignore that, in Canada and the United States, there still exist hundreds of backlogged court cases that are meant to clarify Treaties of partnership reaching back to the 1700s (Sioui, 1991; Sioui, 1996; Churchill, 1994).

Efforts to arrive at an equitable resolution of these Treaties will help Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians to reframe their relations beyond the apartheid of "winners and losers." Sa'ke'j Henderson's article "**Challenges of Respecting Indigenous World Views in Eurocentric Education**" incisively describes the assumptions and beliefs of both the colonizers and their latter-day academic apologists.

Henderson understands Eurocentricism as an artificial context based on the ultra-theory of diffusionism. That is, "genuine culture" is seen to emanate centrally from Europe. Colonization thus takes on the shape of divine intervention for its assumed evolutionary benefits. Non-European regions are falsely explained away as relatively uninhabited, nomadically (unclaimed) lands, their "sparse" populations being intellectually, as well as spiritually, inferior.

The assumption of European cultural superiority rests upon the concept of its being universal, and in its being superior in "rationality," and, thus, generative of progress. With benefit, one might stop to reflect for a moment on the inadequacy of abraxial thinking which crudely casts the colonizer as "rational" in contrast to the "outlying" Indigenous cultures as being "irrational." Greater pause would allow for vital recognition of the super-rational, the necessary melding of high emotional commitment existing within all cultural group's mentation in order to formulate good judgement. Super-rational thought, "pattern thinking," or emotionally-charged judgement has been clearly recognized as an attribute of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal awareness (Ross, 1996; Kant, 1892).

Sa'ke'j's brief overview of European philosophy highlights the Frankfurt School and more current deconstructionism, most frequently critiquing their absence of recognition of true alterity (the existence of cultural, natural, spirit-being "otherness"). In its conclusion, this article is an anthem to some key values of Indigenous world view. In its main body, it explains why, if the reader recognizes cross-culturality, we have arrived at "the potential termination point of Eurocentric thought."

☼ Robin June Hood draws upon her extensive experience as an educator and social animator among the Maya of the Guatemalan highlands in the paper "**Weaving a World of Respect**." Robin touches upon a number of important aspects of traditional Mayan education and culture, involving the "heart of the sky" and the "heart of the earth," with the guidance of trusted Mayan educators.

With a brief historical/political background, Hood highlights Mayan concepts of time, the Calendars, and a sacred text – the *Popol Vul*. She then details some of the cultural meaning held by the art of weaving among the Maya. Importantly, Robin includes her translation of a recent interview with Agustin Sapon Morales, a Mayan Daykeeper, on the topic of Indigenous education values.

☼ "**The Cry of the Loon: Mysterious, Mournful, Remembering Place**." For anyone who has observed the loon upon a lake, carrying the next generation of her family on her back, Oscar Kawagley's sharing of the Yupiaq name for the loon will hold special meaning: "tunutellek" – that which is packing something.

This article outlines specific ways for Indigenous people to resist the current technological monoculture and, instead, to recreate traditional cultural responsibilities and strengths. The loon asks "What was the question that makes technology the answer in the first place?"

Of particular interest to communities aiming to re-establish traditional values, as alternatives to federal/provincial (or state) standards of education, will be Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools included as an addendum.

II CURRICULUM CHANGE

A. Well-Being, the Prelude to Learning

⊙ As the call of the loon's lament still echoes, Brenda Wastasecoot's **"Culturally Appropriate Healing and Counselling: One Woman's Path Toward Healing"** is meant to preface the papers focused upon Curriculum change at the post-secondary and school levels. Healing and learning are understood to be two sides of the same coin; realizing that coherent learning cannot take place prior to attaining well-being.

Wastasecoot's poignant revelations about effective ways of healing from abuse are deeply moving and very practical. Her clear depiction of the inherent weaknesses of commonly employed forms of counselling and medical treatment of traumatic abuse are well set out. In comparison, effective concrete methods of healing from childhood trauma, that Wastasecoot's study discovers, are congruent with traditional Indigenous approaches.

"Tradition is often hard to isolate ... to some, tradition is doing things the 'old ways,' following the time-honoured steps of the Elders of our communities. To others, tradition is a way of thinking, of showing respect for the values and spirituality of our ancestors, in spite of the way we live today. And to others, tradition is whatever is handed down from one generation to the next. To most, it is what we learn from our family that makes tradition a viable tool for dealing with the future" (Hill, in Bruchac, 1989: 124-125).

Wastasecoot unites all of these definitions in her aim to illuminate sustainable healing methods ... "Let the torrent of tears wash the pain of our people" (Elder Eva McKay, 1998).

B. Post-Secondary Systems

⊙ In **"A Sense of Place: Aboriginal Research as Ritual Practice,"** Carolyn Kenny carefully describes the cross-currents of what it means to be an Indigenous person involved in post-secondary education. She further points out the difficulties of carrying out constructive research in Indigenous communities today, under the weight of the history of previous researchers' hegemonic practice. Kenny recognizes the site of the university as one of cultural struggle, within which, nevertheless, an Aboriginal person's sense of place can grow. She valuably defines "Aboriginal research" in a way that includes people without Indigenous status, and yet whose work "embodies the core values and beliefs" of her Elders.

Carolyn's original description of research as ritual practice adds substantially to the ongoing development and rationalization of qualitative research methodologies.

- **"An Aboriginal Pedagogical Model: Recovering an Aboriginal Pedagogy from the Woodlands Cree."** In this paper, Cathy Wheaton begins with a critique of current practices in Native Studies in the Canadian University context. She notes specific dimensions that require attention: consistent and respectful inclusion of living Elders, as well as oral tradition processes; recognition of the sacred dimensions of knowledge; expansion of pedagogical methods; the progressive recognition of heterogeneity among, and within, Aboriginal culture groups; and increasing direct contact with natural settings.

Wheaton then outlines a vigorous process of learning that she reconstitutes from a narrative reflection of her traditional upbringing. The main components she details are: observation, experience, introspection and inquiry. She construes this model to be of value within a broad range of settings and levels, and among non-Aboriginal, as well as Aboriginal, students.

C. School Curricula

- **"Teaching/Learning Across Cultures: Strategies for Success"** by Ray Barnhardt is a carefully constructed guide for any educator setting out to work with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. His extensive experience in teacher education consistently rises to the surface of this article in the form of practical advice: How do you enter the community? What do you need to know? What should you teach? How should you teach? How do you determine what has been learned? Ray has also included school strategies for intercultural communication in urban environments.

- The heart of **"The 'At-Risk' Student: Defining Experiences,"** by Melinda Hrechka, takes the form of a case-study of how resource programming has been achieved in one First Nations community. Hrechka first carefully defines the concept of "at risk student" in a manner that reinforces many of the caveats recently set out by Roland Chrisjohn (1999). Melinda's personal list of nine factors that require consideration to prevent a deficit-approach to children at risk is worthy of serious consideration.

Her case study allows the reader a good view of positive processes of diagnostic testing, individualized programming, and, especially, a close-up view of constructive school-community interaction processes. The focus of the case is upon a young boy suffering from fetal alcohol syndrome, and the resource teacher's development of trust with he and his family.

◉ The article "**How Plants Can be Used in the Classroom**," by Natalie Tays, is an outcome of her working both as a classroom teacher and as a researcher, who has facilitated university scholar and community Elder discussions about traditional medicine plant knowledge. There is an additional curriculum resource entitled "Aboriginal Plant Use in Canada's Northwest Boreal Forest" (1999), that could well be used in conjunction with the practical curriculum activities set out by Tays in this paper. The enlarged photographs of mid-northern Manitoba medicine plants in this resource are excellent, making identification accurate.

In the article at hand, Natalie provides a general rationalization for using local plants in the science curriculum, ideas for research projects, and specific hands-on activities for multiple grade levels. She also focuses upon recognition of certain plants as first aid medicines. Tays includes some traditional Cree storytelling, and consistently underlines the appropriate approaches of respect for the Elders, in gathering medicine knowledge.

III GOVERNANCE AND POLICIES

◉ Robin J. Marles brings the insight of an experienced ethnobotanist to bear in the article "**The Preservation of Traditional Plant Lore**." He notes with irony that Canada's Federal Government, in allotting logging rights, has labelled the plant-rich northern forest as being "non-productive." He seriously questions the sustainability of current economic exploitation of the northern resources. Productive long-term initiatives in First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities will require the recognition and support of the Canadian Government. As clearly depicted in the N.F.B. video "Wrapped in Plastic" (1999), many Aboriginal communities have grown by three hundred percent since 1972, yet government funding has steadily diminished. The poverty, malnutrition, joblessness and resulting anomie must be replaced with productive community initiatives in fish-canning, lumber, ecotourism, medicine plant development, and other sustainable endeavours.

Next, Marles outlines the respectful methods by which he approached Elders for dietary, nutraceutical pharmaceutical and cosmeceutical traditional plant knowledge. He describes a team-work approach of development and disseminating such knowledge. He acknowledges that much work remains "to turn our well-intentioned dreams of commercial boreal medicinal plant products into a truly sustainable reality" (Marles et al. 1999). The attached bibliography may serve as a helpful resource on "The Protection of Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights."

⁕ In the article, "**Ten Years After: Cross Lake Education Authority Local Control of Indian Education**," Rebecca Ross describes the Manitoba community of Cross Lake's efforts to successfully straddle two worlds of needs: maintaining traditional ways and preparing for current economic needs.

In broad brush strokes, she first outlines what has led up to the current education system, involving successive federal, provincial and band-operated means. The history of Cross Lake education is seen to have encompassed wide variations in quality of program, community support and student performance. An explanation of the community demographics is included which details the Education Authority and the school system.

Interesting highlights of innovative in-school and community programs are shared: A First Nation's Language Program, A First Nation's Studies Program, A Wilderness Outdoor Education Camp, A First Nation's Science and Technology Program, a First Nation's Cooperative Education Program, A Senior-Years Program, A Community-Based Adult Training Centre.

Rebecca's article closes by describing the Seven Traditional Sacred Teachings, and processes of implementing education change that are responsive to cultural traditions.

⁕ The work of Paul Chartrand is represented in this text by transcriptions of two watershed speeches he has made. The first "**An Absolutely Uncritical Look at What has been Written about the Metis**" is a tongue-in-cheek, yet scathing, critique of academia's past treatment of Metis culture and history. Chartrand highlights that the constitutional Aboriginal rights of Metis peoples are enshrined in the *Constitution Act* of 1982. Yet, blatantly prejudiced terms such as "mixed bloods" and "half-breeds" are seen to have made their way into scholarly writings of the 1980s. Such ignorance is contrary to current research on the complexity of genetic inheritance and the inadequacy of blood-quantum in determining cultural identity (Schewich and Young, 1997: 4-16; Urso Spina and Tai, 1998: 36-40; Brant, 1990: 534-539).

Paul's "**Building the Momentum**" is his recent opening address to the Canadian Bar Association and Indigenous Bar Association. He offers some insights into the final report of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,* and related current federal responses. He notes that "the litmus test" for Canada's policy response to RCAP would be the federal adoption of key recommendations regarding the accession of Aboriginal groups to nation status. He further notes that, to date, the federal government has not held a forum to draw up a Canada-wide framework agreement to achieve these key recommendations.

Chartrand does not aim to trivialize the important projects the government has undertaken in response to RCAP (health care, youth centre development, and the Healing Foundation focus on Residential School abuses). Yet, he decries the further development of Aboriginal policy in bureaucratic isolation. He cites the recent federal attempt to "exonerate" Louis Riel through public poll, as an example of side-stepping Aboriginal leadership. He urges that the RCAP be followed-up carefully so that questions of identity of "nations" or "peoples" might properly be vested in the law of the Constitution, in the absence of case law.

Chartrand very pointedly attacks the misconception that self-government would necessarily accord special rights to "racial minorities." Rather, he reinforces the RCAP view that "Aboriginal peoples" are comprised of distinct historic, social and political communities. He provides some concrete suggestions as to how Canada's legal system may now be able to democratically move beyond Lord Durham's conception of Canada as "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state" toward a vision of a multinational Canada.

In "**Working for the Government in Indigenous Education: Strategic Planning in Current Maori Education in New Zealand**," Rawiri Brell focuses upon systemic policy development and implementation. He notes that, from a background of intense colonization, the Maori and the New Zealand government are currently attempting to address past injustices in an environment still suffering from unsettled treaties, poverty, unemployment and poor housing.

Brell describes major New Zealand research trends in addressing Maori education development, in the light of being in the difficult role of a Maori public servant.

The main body of Rawiri's article is his overview of present day policy initiatives, which reflect Maori communities' perceived priorities, coupled with a detailed account of a working strategic framework for change. This strategic approach will serve as a valuable reference for other national and Indigenous systems development. Brell details specific, vital commitments to making systemic change: good communication practices, refining processes of policy development, ongoing evaluation of existing policy effectiveness, organizing long-term links between Maori communities and government departments, and achieving overall social policy coherence.

Within a more coherent social policy framework, Brell sees the likely refinement of school support, the raising of Maori student achievement, and the more conscientious meeting of treaty resolution expectations.

- Marlene Brant Castellano's paper is entitled "**Education and Renewal in Aboriginal Nations: Highlights of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples**." It contains a succinct overview of the mandate and overall thrust of the RCAP recommendations. This work is particularly clear in describing the central role of various education processes to achieve positive growth in First Nations' governance, cultural renewal, and economic well-being. Brant Castellano further underscores the vital importance of educating the general Canadian public regarding RCAP recommendations in order to establish a renewed relationship with Metis, Inuit and First Nations communities. Lastly, the author briefly describes current Federal action and laments the scale of the effort in that milieu, and among First Nations, in order to proceed to realize a true partnership.

- The traditional Indigenous process of reaching consensus may erroneously be construed as an inefficient, time-consuming "nicety" that is unnecessary in the 21st century. However, the "**Declaration Affirming the Principles for Indigenous Education and Self-Government**" was arrived at consensually by the gathered delegates of the "Voice of the Drum" in a timely manner. Simply, the development of deep trust, intense communication of ideas, and reliance upon selfless leadership in formulating a declaration were understood by the over two hundred participating delegates to be achievable within the eleven days of the gathering. The four directions of the Principles of Indigenous Education were thus set out to be: self-determination, earth renewal, restoration of civilization, and the active formation of partnerships.

IV REFLECTIONS

The summative reflections of a respected Elder and the visionary insights of an anonymous participant of the "Voice of the Drum" complete this book.

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Circular Vision – Through Native Eyes

Marie Eshkibok-Trudeau

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Circular Vision

Visual perception or human perception can be described in two ways. The first kind of vision is called linear vision, which is seeing and interpreting with a 'straight ahead vision' or a hundred and eighty-degree vision. Those artists who function with linear vision view the world through the elements of design, line, shape, colour and texture.

In this article, I will speak about circular vision from a Native perspective using a culture-based homeschooling curriculum that was used for homeschooling on the Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation during the early years of 1990. The child, Elizabeth

A. Trudeau, Anishinabe name "Binaasiikwe," dodem Fish clan, is the daughter of Marie and Wilfred A. Trudeau. She was homeschooled from first grade up to half a year of second grade as a result of a lack of vision quest teachings, fasting teachings, Native language scroll teachings, and sweatlodge teachings being absent in the provincial school system on the reservation. The parents, Marie and Wilfred, wanted their daughter, Elizabeth, to experience her first vision quest before she was allowed into the regular provincial school system. Although the First Nation had been given control of their own education system, the opposition from the Catholic Church and some of the people in leadership positions on the reserve was, and still is, an obstruction. As well, some parents are still opposed to our sacred ways and some of the reasons are unknown at this time, perhaps, resistance to change may be a common cause.

Marie and Wilfred know from their own experiences of vision questing, sweatlodges and listening to the scroll teachings in their Native language that, in order for one to apply the sacred teachings of our ancestors to their lives, they must feel those teachings. It is not enough to hear and read about them in the school and the church system, but, as Anishinabe, we must also feel them through vision questing.

Vision questing or seeing through a three-hundred and sixty-degree vision, is a complete way of seeing or viewing the world. If one experiences and understands the relationship to the natural world, its physical reality as well as its spiritual being, then it is a total way of seeing. Although many myths and legends have been recorded, written down and studied, they have not been understood by those who function with linear vision. One of the reasons for this is the lack of understanding of the Native language used by elders to tell these stories. These stories have been written down in the English language and they have lost their meaning. However, when the same stories are spoken and heard in the Native language, they carry a powerful meaning. As an example, in the sacred lodges of Native people, when a scroll teaching is given in the Native language, it is so powerful, so great, so enlightening that it may cause one to cry. They are not crying because they received a teaching, but they are crying because of the power they have received in the scroll teaching in the Native language.

Native language begins very early in birth when the baby is still in the womb of the mother. Beginning from childhood, a baby is an inquisitive human being with all sorts of needs. As we all know, a baby's development is a continuous process, whether it be the development of the body or the development of the personality. The story of this little human being does not start at five years or two, or at six months, but starts at birth and before birth. This is why Native women sing sacred ceremonial songs to their babies while carrying. Within these songs is the Native language and, as mothers, we begin the process of instilling our mother tongue into our children. Before birth, when the baby is still in the womb, she is a human being, and by the time the baby is born, she will have a great deal of learning experience, whether it be pleasant or unpleasant. The baby has shared your meals of wild meat and wild berries, and she has known whenever you were anxious, excited or angry. If you have been restless, she has become used to movement. On the other hand, if you were a restful sort of person, she has known peace.

Shortly after birth, culturation begins as early contact between mother and child helps to lay the foundation for the child's personality, emotional development, and her capacity to withstand the frustration and shocks that will follow. In the Anishinabe world, the grandmothers and aunties encourage their daughters to place the child in a T'kanagan (cradleboard) in order for the child to feel secure, and its afterbirth is buried (Manitowabi, 1987).

Each family member has a place within the family. The family, which is where most of us receive enrichment and harmony of our nature and spirit, is usually where we receive our human life and thought. It is through our families where we fulfil our needs for identity, relatedness, intimacy and growth, in addition to our most deeply human qualities. These qualities must be nurtured from the time a child is still inside the womb up until the time when he/she is ready to leave the family. A family is where most of us spend most of our lives. There is our family of origin and, as we marry and have children, then our grandchildren and their children will continue the chain of family systems. On and on through life, the family is where the influence of our culture and customs are carried on.

Elizabeth's family consisted of a mother and father, grandparents on both sides of the family, aunties and uncles. Her family lived according to what bare necessities were available. They live in a one-room living room, kitchen and dining area with two beds upstairs in the loft of their cedar log home. She was able to feel a sense of belonging and a sense of meaning. Elizabeth's family believed that clothes did not make a person, but were worn for comfort. Food resources, some of which came from the food market, were obtained through planting and gathering.

Elizabeth's father made her first cradleboard. "The material used to make the cradleboard is pine that has been struck by lightning" (Gillman & Morey, 1974). The father must look for a certain type of tree in the mountains or on the hill. A certain amount of material is cut from the trunk of the tree and the tree is allowed to heal itself of the cut. The whole tree is not cut down; only the amount needed is taken in order to conserve the tree. The tree will continue to grow. According to a well-respected elder from the Garden River First Nation in Ontario, Dan Pine, "before a person goes out to cut the amount he needs for the cradleboard, he must do a ritual" (1986). When the cradleboard is finished, the father hangs a cane, spider's web and a small bundle containing the baby's umbilical cord. When the baby notices these items hanging on the cradleboard, the parents are to talk to the baby to explain the reasons for the cane hanging in front of the baby. Talking to your babies is very beneficial and creates the bonding that is needed between mother and child. The cane symbolizes the life cycle from birth to an elder and is placed on the cradleboard so the child will live to be an old person. In addition to the cane is a spider's web which is a protector from evil; evils such as other peoples' jealousies, evil thoughts and negativities.

The third object on the hanger is the pouch containing the umbilical cord of the child. This pouch or cord symbolizes the relationship between mother and child. The umbilical cord is buried between birth and seven years old and it symbolizes that the child is from Mother Earth. It is explained to her that her real mother is Mother Earth and that the physical mother, which is ourselves, are just teachers, who guide and care for the child (Bisson, 1993). An eagle's head was carved on Banaasiikwe's cradleboard to symbolize her Anishinabe name, which could mean one or two ways of saying it: Little Thunderbird girl or little girl of the Thunderbird. In addition to her Anishinabe name, her father's Anishinabe name is also carved in it and her mother's clan. By placing the baby in a cradleboard, we are instilling security in the baby because the baby feels as though he/she is still in the womb. It is a gradual introduction into the universe of human life.

Elizabeth received her first experience of human love with her mother and father and within her family. It is here with her mother, and within her family, that she learns how to love. Once she has learned to crawl off her mother's lap and is able to walk around by herself, she soon finds that she is on her own to make her own decisions, always with the advice of her parents, aunties, uncles and grandparents. If she toddled up to a fire and was about to put her hand on a hot coal that would hurt her, she would hear "Shhh," warning her not to do it. As any baby does, she would look at her parents first and then at the coal again, trying to decide what to do. If she decided to touch the coal and got burned as a result, she would soon learn to listen to that "Shhh." She made the decision to touch the coal and, in addition, she was not forced. Therefore, one who makes his/her own decision to do something always does it better than one who is forced to do something.

Eventually, as the child begins to talk, it is the language, as mentioned by Samples (1976) in his book, "which introduces the child to its first cultural discovery," and, therefore, language is the first cultural influence. By learning language (for example its words, its structure, its grammar, and its feelings), the child begins to experience learning the traditional stories of a culture. The child begins to pronounce the words in the home and grows with the Native language.

The sacred lodges, such as the sweatlodge, the ceremonial lodge, the moon lodge, are some of the great stepping stones for Native people to use as classrooms in order to begin the process of teaching the young about their culture. To be able to take the children and students out of the normal setting of a classroom and bring them out into a circular natural setting is an advantage in learning. It has always been the original way that our ancestors have taught us. One of the units that was designed demonstrates this. Elizabeth, along with her parents and some local Wikwemikong band members, constructed a Midewiwin Lodge and sweatlodge near the home where the actual homeschooling occurred. This provided hands-on learning for Elizabeth as she was able to practice her role as a young girl and her place in lodge building. During the lodge building, she was required to wear a skirt and it was explained to her that her role as a female was important in the lodge.

Midewiwin, which simply means "good-hearted way," once flourished in Wikwemikong, however, with the encroachment of another religion, some of our people went underground and did not practice their rituals any longer. A more detailed version of Midewiwin may be researched in the "Seventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1891." A subject area of Marie and Wilfred's homeschool curriculum entitled "Ceremonial Behaviour"consisted of teaching Elizabeth appropriate behaviour around the sacred lodges of the Midewiwin and other sacred lodges such as Sundance, Raindance, etc. She was taught that, in following the Midewiwin Code of Life, one must be careful in how she speaks to another and to speak with kindness. To be rude, boastful and unkind is inappropriate of a Midewiwin person. She was taught to pray for the water at ceremonies and that water is sacred, and to give thanks for its help in the healing of the people through the sweatlodge. It was explained to her why the firepit is in the shape of the crescent moon and why cedar is placed upon the alter of the pit. She was given the opportunity to place the cedar upon the pit. She was trained to wear skirts and dresses upon entering the Midewiwin Lodge. Early discipline at such a young age enabled training and responsibility to occur. We have a kind way of discipline if we are given the chance. Another area of the curriculum was "Prophecies" whereby Elizabeth learned about the seven prophecies of Three Fires Nation – Ojibwa, Odawa and Pottawatomi (Benton-Banai, 1982). Vision Quests, Clans/Dodems, Fasting Teachings, Bear Teachings, etc. were taught under this area. She was taught how to give a teaching in her own Native tongue as this is how we were instructed in the original teachings. Elizabeth's clan, which is that of the Fish clan, was explained to her. Some of the areas of her Science curriculum centered upon the Clan/Dodaem System. This system, which we believe the Creator gave to the Earth's original people, the Anishinabe, was once used to govern the Three Fires people.

Part of the word itself "do-do" in our Native language is a word that means "breast" (Eshkibok, 1986). Elizabeth was taught that, as Anishinabe, we do not call it a clan but dodaem. The Great Law of the "O-do-i-daym-i-wan" was given to Anishinabe as a way of sacred knowledge. It was a system of government whereby we maintained our individual and collective identity. This is why we lived in harmony with one another during the days of our ancestors, because each and every one of us knew our dodaem responsibilities. For example, the Bear Dodaem people knew it was their responsibility to have knowledge of the medicines, because the bear spent most of its time encircling and protecting the village. Because they did this, they studied the medicines. Women of any tribe knew it was their responsibility to cook for feasts within their village or community and did not wait to be told to do so. Some of the men's responsibilities included looking after the sacred fire, looking after the tobacco, etc.

The Native people who are of the fish dodem were known as the philosophers who were seekers of truth and found answers. In addition to this, they knew when the tides would rise at the full moon; and, they knew when the maple sap water would begin to flow just by looking at the position of the big dipper in the sky (Memagos, 1989). They knew what was happening in the sky and water world, and they were also very intellectual people.

As part of her curriculum studies on animals, my daughter was taken on field trips to see live animals at the Toronto Zoo and other zoo areas within Ontario. Elizabeth was given a small portion of the Bear Story to learn in the Odawa language

(Video, Assembly of First Nation, 1991). She was also taught that it is not the Ground Hog who comes out during the February moon, but it is the Bear. This is the reason why this moon is call "Makwa Giizis" (Bear Moon). An elder, Silas Fisher from Walpole Island, who has since passed on, carried this important part of our history.

Elizabeth's first language in the home was the Odawa language and she was encouraged to speak her Native tongue during home instruction. Basic instructional language was used in the home in order that she may grasp the words and begin to use the Odawa language. As an example, if it was time to eat, "Wiisinaadaa" which means "Let's eat." The child begins to associate the word with the behaviour when the family sits down to eat after the instruction in the Native language.

One of the objectives of the homeschool curriculum consisted of narrating personal vision quest experiences. This specific objective is what is missing in our band operated schools and is of the greatest importance in order for our children to begin the process of feeling those sacred gifts of humility, honesty, love, etc. Elizabeth was provided hands-on learning whereby she was involved in the actual building of her own fasting lodge. A fasting lodge was built outside near her home. At the age of seven, she was taught that she must experience those sacred gifts of humility, kindness, love, truth, honesty, respect and wisdom. It is not enough to hear or read about them in school, but she must also feel those sacred gifts through a vision quest. An example of this is while sitting upon Mother Earth, one can feel pity and humility for a drooping flower who must wait for it to rain. The flower that is thirsty and the one fasting is also thirsty, at the same time can feel that gift of humility for one another because they are both thirsting for that sacred waterlife. Elizabeth was prepared for a one-day and one-night fast, as part of her training at the age of seven years. At this stage in the child's life, mentally, emotionally, and physically, it is said that the child is ready to leave the mother's side and attend school to meet the new school teacher, principal, janitor, and whomever the child will encounter in the new school setting. First of all, preparation included preparing her body. She was allowed to sleep on the floor of her bedroom in order for her to become accustomed to the hard ground upon Mother Earth. Elizabeth travelled to many pow-wows during the summer months and received a large amount of training by camping outdoors.

She was trained not to be afraid of the dark and night creatures by taking walks with her mother or father at night so she would become familiar with darkness. She was not permitted to view horror movies or violent movies for this may discourage her from fasting for the new life. It was at this time in a child's life where the child is taught to put away her teddy bears and that it is only babies and infants who play with teddy bear toys. She is also instructed to put away her terrible-two behaviour of whining and being rebellious, for to carry this kind of behaviour into adulthood is inappropriate. To be a little girl in an old woman's body or a little boy in an old man's body is not very becoming of a young woman or young man in the Anishinabe world. This one day vision quest fast is to help the young child move from the stage of infancy into childhood. It is also a time when the child learns to let go of her mother, and the mother also learns to let go of her child when the child is put out into the bush to be cradled by Mother Earth. The child is taught that the physical mother is not his/her real mother, but only the mother who cares, teaches, and guides the child. The child learns who its real mother is and that is Mother Earth. She begins the process of learning to respect the earth for its teachings and spirituality. Mother Earth is the child's first teacher and all things upon Mother Earth are considered sacred. Mother Earth must be treated with respect and kindness as our Mothers and Grandmothers for they are life carriers who bring new life into this universe.

The sacred Grandmother teaching talks about the traditional law that the Creator gave to Grandmother Moon (Bisson, 1999). Elizabeth was also taught that she must fast where she grew up and came from, because the animal spirits know her in her own home setting. She was warned not to go fasting elsewhere for the animal spirits in a different area may become angry with her during her vision quest (Beaucage, 1990). This is the very first stage of a child's life in the Anishinabe world. It is known as the preparation of life because we, as parents, are preparing that child for the road ahead.

Another part of the curriculum that was used to teach language was singing lodge songs. When Elizabeth and her mother readied the lodge for ceremonies, or when cleaning the lodge after a ceremony, they would sing songs in their Native Odawa language. Other ways and means of learning songs occurred during the times when riding in their vehicle. It is very easy for our children to remember their Native language through songs. These songs carry great meaning and the connection is there between our Native language songs and our spirituality. There are water songs that are the women's responsibility (Manitowabi, 1989). These songs were explained to the child in such a way that each syllable was pronounced in order that the child may grasp its meaning. These songs were sung with truth and were used to express oneself, and one can feel the spirit within the song.

There is also a proper way to sit in the ceremonial lodge. One side of the lodge belongs to the men and the other side belongs to the women (Benton-Banai, 1989). Other responsibilities of women and girls in the lodge include cooking, gathering cedar, and ensuring that there is water to fill the sacred vessels. During a ceremony, Elizabeth was allowed to practice her responsibilities as a young girl, something which she is unable to do in the regular band operated school system.

All in all, today, Elizabeth has completed two movies, one of which she took the lead acting role. In addition to this, she is a hoopdancer, a jingle dress dancer, and is an excellent teacher in facilitating cultural workshops. She continues to fast annually in the bush. As a result of beginning her menstruation cycle, she is presently on her Strawberry Fast and, after one year, she will graduate to two days of fasting. She is also a carrier of the Buffalo Dance Teaching which talks about a young woman's sacredness. Elizabeth has hopes and dreams of continuing on with her acting career, however, she is also looking at the field of Psychology and in helping her people through spirit, body, and mind - Native psychology. As parents dedicated to the preservation and the practising of our Odawa way of life, this experience of homeschooling our eldest daughter has given us a feeling of accomplishment in this earth life, and it makes us feel good to know that she will carry this with her for the rest of her life and that it will always be a guiding force in her life. It has also strengthened us, as parents, in practising our Aboriginal rights in educating our own child in the original manner that was given to us by the Creator. It is also a reminder to our Native educators to look at an original learning style that was there in the beginning and to begin the process of somehow incorporating this into our own band operated school system for those parents and children who seriously want this for themselves. To be able to nourish that part of our mental and emotional self through vision questing is an important part of our healing. Nourishing that beautiful gift of life that the Creator has given to man and woman is something to cherish forever, and our children will always be thankful to us for what we have done for them in this earth life. They will know how to carry those seven sacred gifts in a sacred manner - honesty, love, kindness, humility, truth, respect and wisdom.

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When Prison is a School –

Today's Residential Schools

Paula Mallea

Introduction

I propose to begin with an historical overview of the situation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. I will explore the thesis that, although in the 1980s Canada eliminated the blight of residential schools for Aboriginal children, many of the features of colonization, deracination and assimilation continue today through the medium of our prison system. This is especially devastating in view of the fact that so many young Aboriginal people are growing up and acquiring their education within the walls of Canadian prisons.

Background

Canada's history of colonization and the attempted assimilation of Aboriginal peoples is similar to that of many other countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Africa and the Americas. It is not a history of which we can be proud. In Canada, it created a shocking third-world lifestyle for many Aboriginal people.

Taking the province of Manitoba as an example, we can refer to the finding of *The Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry* (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991). In 1991, the authors reported that the average income for a status Indian in Manitoba was $10,672, compared to $16,796 for the province as a whole. In Winnipeg, over half of the Aboriginal population was living below the poverty line, compared to 20% for non-Aboriginals. With respect to housing, only 34-44% of Aboriginal people had indoor plumbing and 40% had central heating, compared to 94% and 82% of the general population, respectively. Housing was found to be generally crowded and inferior.

In Canada, more generally, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people today is four times that for non-Aboriginals. Life expectancy is much lower for Aboriginals – 7 to 8 years lower – comparable to the life expectancy rate for Nicaragua (Charleson, 1998). The death rate for Aboriginals between the ages of 25 and 44 is five times that for non-Aboriginals. The suicide rate is more than double. Infant mortality is higher (1.7 times). Dietary problems are much more prevalent. And whereas 8% of the Canadian population relies upon some type of social assistance, 29% of Aboriginal Canadians must do so (Charleson, 1998).

Politics: History

In Canada, the *Constitution Act 1867* and the *Indian Act 1876* gave the federal government total control over all matters affecting Indians. The legislation made Indians wards of the state. All aspects of their lives were controlled by the state, from cradle to grave. They were placed on small, unproductive reserves, and forbidden to practice their culture. Infractions reaped jail sentences.

For many decades during this century, Aboriginal people were forbidden by law to pursue their legitimate land claims (by legislation which made it illegal to raise money for this purpose). Although many Aboriginal people fought in two World Wars for Canada, they did not obtain the right to vote federally until 1960. As recently as 1968 (with the infamous White Paper of Jean Chretien, now Canada's Prime Minister), the official federal policy towards Aboriginal people was one of assimilation.

Politics: Present

Today, despite many efforts to repeal the *Indian Act*, Aboriginal people are still governed by this paternalistic legislation. The reserve system still exists, although many Aboriginal people have made their way to urban centres. Efforts at decolonization are being made, and there is a new effort to assert autonomy and to fight for self-government. Land claims are being settled with glacial slowness, due mainly to the recalcitrance of provincial and federal governments. As well, many First Nations are struggling to exercise their rights under various treaties signed over the last century. This has presented special problems, with even the United Nations expressing concerns over the methods and bad faith of the Crown, both then and now.

All of this has been complicated by the fact that there are 633 distinct bands in Canada, with many discrete languages and cultures. As well, in the struggle for autonomy, Aboriginal women are fighting to reassert their own traditional role which, at one time, commanded respect within the culture.

Residential Schools

A particular blight upon the Aboriginal landscape in Canada was the establishment of residential schools. The *Indian Act* (s. 114) and the various treaties contained promises by the Crown that it would provide education to Aboriginal people.

In partnership with the churches, then, the government established 80 residential schools. Although some children had good experiences with these schools, the vast majority had experiences which left a terrible legacy of abuse, both physical and emotional (Grant, 1996; Haig-Brown, 1993). So extreme was the situation in these schools that the United Nations is today investigating and documenting the various human rights violations which took place there (Matas, 1998). The last of these schools was finally closed in 1988. 125,000 Aboriginal children in all have passed through their doors.

The stated purpose for these schools was to remove Aboriginal children from their culture and to replace their culture and values with those of Europeans/Whites/Christians. This was a deliberate and concerted attempt at assimilation, and some would say genocide. The method employed was to remove (forcibly if necessary) children from their families and villages, and to take them often hundreds of miles away for ten months of the year. Parents were thus unable to visit (especially during the time of the "pass system," which kept Aboriginals on reserves unless they had express permission of the Indian agent), and the children lived lonely, desperate lives in an alien and sometimes brutal environment.

Grant (1996) and Haig-Brown (1993) both document that, within residential schools, European culture was dominant, and racism among staff was rampant. The purpose of the schools was to destroy a culture for which the authorities had no understanding or respect. The materials and subjects studied were designed for and by non-Aboriginals without regard for cultures, histories or realities of Aboriginal life. Aboriginal spirituality, particularly, was banned and described as evil. The speaking of Aboriginal languages was banned; infractions of this rule were severely punished, and all teaching was done in the children's second language. The children suffered from extreme isolation, and were totally separated from any hope of cultural transmission. Siblings were even separated from each other.

In these schools, the particulars of Aboriginal culture were despised and denigrated. Children were forced to give up their own clothing and to wear uniforms and numbers rather than names. Their braids, a source of pride in their culture, were cut off. The school system was completely hierarchical in the European fashion, and there was no inherent respect for children, as there is in Aboriginal culture. No Aboriginal foods were allowed in the schools. None of the traditional celebrations were allowed. Sun Dance, Thirst Dance, all were disallowed and replaced with European-style sports. Finally, there was the denigration of women who had traditionally been the respected keepers of Aboriginal culture.

One child said of his experience at residential school: "We were not to think or act or speak like an Indian. And ... we would go to hell and burn for eternity if we did not listen to their way of teaching." Religion was used "as a weapon in the attack on traditional native spirituality" (Haig-Brown, 1993).

Chief Florence McLean (1998), Chairperson of the First Nations Women's Committee, Association of Manitoba Chiefs, put it this way:

> The churches and the government of Canada stole our children away, stole our reason for living, then they returned them to us as strangers for two months, only to take them back for another year, to ingrain into them that our culture is nothing but pagan, worthless, simplistic and primitive, among other things. Our treasures, our hope, our future were thrown into a foreign system where they were belittled daily, as well as forced to endure various types of abuses. Many were broken in mind, body and spirit.

When Prison is a School

Today, the residential schools are closed. However, large numbers of Aboriginal children and youth are receiving an "education" of a very questionable kind within the European institution of the prison. And, within these institutions, many of the same tools of colonization and assimilation exist.

Aboriginal people are seriously over-represented in Canadian jails. The *AJI Report* documented that, in Manitoba, although only 11.8% of the population was Aboriginal, over half of the jail population was Aboriginal. Among incarcerated young offenders, 61% were Aboriginal, and among women, 67%. Aboriginal people obtained bail less often, spent more time in pre-trial custody, were more than twice as likely to be sent to jail, and received sentences about 2 1/2 times the national average. In 1988, of the 235 Aboriginal persons in the highest level of secure custody in Canada, 150 were in the province of Manitoba (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991).

The *AJI Report* recorded systemic racism within the justice system as the main explanation for these numbers. At the same time, the Chief Justice of the province vehemently denied that this was the case. A couple of personal anecdotes may help to illustrate the degree of racism existing within the system – as defence counsel, I have represented many Aboriginal people. In one case, two young women were caught shoplifting and brought before the court. They had taken some clothing for the baby. They had no criminal records at all. They pleaded guilty and were sentenced to jail. In a second case, a young woman bounced a fifteen-dollar cheque. She was arrested and incarcerated overnight to await a bail hearing the next day. She, too, had no criminal record. The charge was eventually dropped. All three of these women were visibly Aboriginal, with recognizably Aboriginal surnames. None of them, I believe, would have spent any time in custody had they been non-Aboriginal.

We can expect the trend of over-representation in jails by Aboriginal people to continue unless there is some serious intervention. In 1998, 56% of Aboriginal people were under the age of 24 (Charleson, 1998), and since most crime is committed by young men between the ages of 15 and 24, it is likely that the over-representation of Aboriginal people in jail will continue. It is also at this very age that we would expect to see these young people receiving their schooling. Instead, they are becoming trapped, often irrevocably, in the criminal justice system. Thus, for a large segment of the Aboriginal population, jail becomes a substitute for school. And like the schools of yesteryear, it becomes an instrument for deracination, abuse, and assimilation.

The parallels are astonishing. Just as in the residential schools, European culture dominates in the prison system and there is racism among staff. There has also historically been little respect for Aboriginal culture, although steps are being taken today to introduce sweats, to permit medicine bags, and to encourage elders to participate in the counselling of inmates. Aboriginal spirituality has, until very recently been, denied within the prison system. Even today, Aboriginal languages may be banned in the prison setting (The *AJI Report* refers to recent threats of punishment in the Agassiz Youth Centre of Manitoba against Aboriginal children for speaking their own language). Prisons provide the same extreme form of isolation which was experienced by children in residential schools, often similarly removing them hundreds or thousands of miles from their homes. Aboriginal dress is not generally allowed in prisons, and uniforms are the order of the day. There is no Aboriginal food. There are no Aboriginal feast days. Women are denigrated, and there are few female role models.

Often, programs within the prison also contribute to the continued destruction of Aboriginal culture. One program called Teen Challenge is now operating within some Manitoba prisons. Teen Challenge is a drug rehabilitation program based upon fundamentalist Christianity. It bans the practice of Native spirituality within the program, and preaches that such spirituality (according to one young graduate) is "the occult." This conservative evangelical group will not accept any approach which is not Bible-based (Teen Challenge; Charette, 1998).

This type of approach causes problems when applied to Aboriginal prison populations. First of all, the program directly challenges the value of Aboriginal culture. For example, in one case in Ontario, a young Aboriginal took an eagle feather and medicine bag to the live-in Teen Challenge program. These sacred items were confiscated. As well, there is a coercive quality to the program – one young offender was recently offered his release from the Manitoba Youth Centre dependent upon his participating in the Teen Challenge program on the outside.

Any program which succeeds in treating a young person's drug dependency is to be commended for that success. However, as officials with the Native Addictions Council say, Aboriginal drug addicts can actually be harmed by attending such a program if it makes them ashamed of their heritage. Despite the controversy, though, the Manitoba government has provided Teen Challenge with $375,000, and the City of Winnipeg $100,000, to assist them to open up a centre in Winnipeg.

Jails do other serious harm to the culture of Aboriginal offenders. The criminal justice system which places them there is completely alien to the Aboriginal culture (Ross, 1996). It is confrontational, hierarchical and adversarial. The emphasis is on punishment, and not on healing or the restoration of harmony in the community. There is no effective input from the victim or the community at large. Consensus decision-making has no place in this system. Within the European system of punishment, there is no effort to "complete the circle." Concepts of "guilty/not guilty" make no sense in many Aboriginal cultures. The language barrier, too, causes problems in dispensing "justice." At the end of a criminal court case, there is virtually never any sense that an offender has been properly shamed, and has paid the price, and that he should now be accepted back into the community. Once in jail, under the European system, the stigma never goes away. There can, therefore, be no healing (Schissel, 1994).

In a very real sense, jail is a "school" for those compelled to attend. It is a "tool of cultural assimilation" (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991). Ivan Illich has said that prison is a high school for crime (Cayley, 1998). Metis Kathleen Makela (1998) says that:

> "Justice" or "law" for Aboriginal peoples in Canada is state-controlled violence. It began with residential schools and government policies of assimilation and continues today with the legal system. Prison has become, for Native men, what high school and college is for the rest of society.

Conclusion

Some attempts are being made to address the issues raised here. In Manitoba, the new Aboriginal Ganootamaage Justice Services program has begun hearing cases. It is hoped that this service will reduce recidivism rates among Aboriginal offenders. Here, and elsewhere in the country, alternative methods such as sentencing circles and community conferencing are also being adopted.

The Supreme Court of Canada recently described as a crisis the over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canadian jails. Together, we sincerely hope that more progress can be made to reverse the trend towards educating Aboriginal youngsters in jail.

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Misty Lake

Dale Lakevold and Darrell Racine

Background

> "I cried as I was packing for my trip to Guy Hill. I just sat down on my bed and cried. For the longest time I didn't move. Then I laughed at myself and I reminded myself that I was only going to Guy Hill for the weekend – not for ten months."
>
> *Former Guy Hill Indian Residential School Student - August 1997*

In the summer of 1991, five former students of the Guy Hill Indian Residential School found themselves sitting together in a downtown restaurant in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Each member reported feelings of dread and malaise. Frank discussions invoked unpleasant memories of the residential school they had attended together in the earliest years of their lives. Unbeknownst to these adults, their impromptu discussions would lead to yearly Healing Gatherings of former students of the Guy Hill Indian Residential School at the site of that infamous facility located some thirty-one kilometers northeast of the town of The Pas, Manitoba.

1997 marks the sixth year former students of the Guy Hill Indian Residential School have returned to that site where their youthfulness, innocence and identity as Indian People were all but obliterated. "Of all the steps taken to achieve that goal [to make Canada a non-Aboriginal, Christian community], none was more obviously a creature of Canada's paternalism toward Aboriginal people, its civilizing strategy and its stern assimilative determination than education" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, vol. I, 1996, p. 333). This year, however, the return to Guy Hill was not at all like those of former times, when the students were to be "educated;" this return trip was a continuation of the former students' healing journey.

The encampment at Guy Hill this year grew to thirty-five camps and the participants, including non-campers or those choosing to camp elsewhere, numbered some one hundred and twenty individuals. Lighting and maintaining the Sacred Fire, Pipe Ceremonies, victory songs, Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, Healing Circles, swimming and feasting were amongst the daily activities. Later in the evenings, entertaining songs and stories were shared by the participants.

> The fog is clearing. I call it the 'Spider-Web,' you know. I never used to hug my brothers and sisters ... I never even used to hug my own children because I was afraid I might be one of "them," a pervert, but now ... after coming here, I can hug my kids."
>
> *Former Guy Hill Indian Residential School Student - August 1997*

(Excerpts from "The Guy Hill Healing Journey," prepared by Ed Azure for the Guy Hill Healing Committee.)

Production

Misty Lake is based on the life of Elizabeth Samuel, a former student of the Guy Hill Indian Residential School in The Pas, Manitoba. We are dramatizing her story with permission, and we thank her for the honour and privilege. Patty and Bird are fictional characters. We also want to thank Augustine for his stories.

The first production of **Misty Lake** was at the Cinematheque Theatre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, July 1-10, 1999, with the following members of the production:

David Boulanger	Drummer
Tracey McCorrister	Mary
Susan Olson	Patty
Marvin Smoker	Bird

Stage Manager: Heather McKenzie
Sound: David McLeod
Directors: Susan Olson and Dale Lakevold

All production rights for this play are held by Dale Lakevold and Darrell Racine of Root Sky Productions, 331B - 9th Street, Brandon, Manitoba, R7A 4A8.

MISTY LAKE

Place/Time: A house on a Northern Manitoba reserve. Mid-afternoon. Early spring. The present.

Characters: Bird, 40, Dene; Mary, 43, Dene; Patty, 25, Metis; The drummer.

Set: Mary's kitchen. Round wooden table with two chairs. Tape recorder and microphone. Papers and notebook. Three coffee cups. Broken hockey stick. Two sets of rosary beads.

Sound/Music: As noted in the script.

[Blackout. The drummer begins a song in the blackout. Low light fades up on the drummer]

[Patty enters. When the drum song ends, she speaks to the audience. She's in the present]

Patty: I'd been stuck on the reserve for three days. It was spring, but there was still snow on the ground and ice on the lakes. It was my first time on a northern reserve, and I arrived there in a plane that looked like a flying cigar tube from the Second World War – the Death Tube they call it. You crawl into that cramped little compartment, and you stay there, strapped into your seat, flying and flying for an eternity, and all you can see is bush and snow. You don't know where you're going, and you don't know where in the hell you are when you finally get there. All you know is that you're surrounded on all sides by bush, and there's no way out.

So there I was in that strange place, a stranger, trying to get a radio interview – on something I didn't know a thing about, on something I didn't want to know about – residential schools and healing.

One year later, I can look back and tell myself I was there for a reason. On the third day, I got what I wanted. And what I needed.

[She returns to the past]

I've been sleeping over at Matilda Moose's place – on the floor! And my back's killing me. This morning, I tried to roll up my bed, and it was stuck. I had to use a knife to pry that foamie off the floor. That's the first time in my life that I've ever had to make my bed with a kitchen knife. I haven't had a shower since I left the city. When I ask about a shower, they tell me to wait until the ice thaws. When I tell them I'm Metis, they stare at me as if I've just flown in from Ox Ass Outlet. When I mention Louis Riel and the Battle of Batoche, they think I'm talking about some guy who's just had a fight with his wife. I was supposed to catch my plane out of here yesterday, but I missed it. Why? Because it came in an hour early. Who's ever heard of a plane coming in an hour early? I'd like to find the guy who sets the schedules around here. I'd kick his ass good and tell him that, where I come from, passenger planes don't leave without their passengers. That's why they're called passenger planes.

So, here I am – getting ready for an interview, except that I don't have anyone to interview. Right now, Mary's out helping someone. She's been out helping someone for three straight days now. Maybe I should just tell her that I'm the one who needs some help. Maybe, that way, I'd get an interview.

God, I need a drink. Please. God. Wherever you are up there. Have mercy on me. Send me a drink. Just one stinking beer. Please.

I had another dream about my grandma last night. We were in a cafe back home in the Turtle Mountains, and she was pointing at this couple over in the corner. They were sitting there at a table with their heads in their hands. They were sick from too much drinking the night before. My grandma pointed to them, and then she whispered to me:

"Those are your parents."

I never knew my parents. Not until I was older. I grew up with my grandma. She died a month ago. And I keep dreaming about her.

[Mary enters. She speaks to the audience]

Mary: Last night, when I went to bed, my two girls were still up watching TV. At about four o'clock in the morning, I woke up with a dream – about that dog of Henry Joseph's going after my two little ones. So, I looked down beside me, and they were asleep right next to me. They were safe, but the other two I didn't know about. When I got up, I found the back door wide open, and that dog was sitting there in the porch with his tongue hanging out.

"Go on, get out!" I said to him. "You're nothing but a nuisance!"

So when I went back in, who did I find but Shelley's boyfriend sitting on the girls' bed. I told him: "Get the hell out of the house right now! You have no right to be here! It's four o'clock in the morning, so get the hell out and take that dog with you!"

[Mary looks at Patty]

Patty: Like I said, I've been trying to get this interview with Mary for three days. And all she keeps telling me are these little stories about her kids and about her dreams and about this fish camp Misty Lake. She told me how she saved her boy one time from a monster in the bush. Another time, she told me how she'd been left for dead out on the ice one day. What does that have to do with healing —

[Patty and Mary say healing at the same time]

Mary: Healing begins —

Patty: Mary tells me.

Mary: When you can talk about your life.

[Patty and Mary sit down for the interview]

Patty: Now you're sure we won't be interrupted this time.

Mary: Nope. The kids are all in school, and I've got the whole afternoon free.

Patty: I mean, I just can't handle even one more interruption.

Mary: I know that —

Patty: And if I get on that plane without this interview, you know what my boss will say. He'll say, "There's the door, Patty. That was your last chance." I've been missing a lot of work lately, and —

Mary: Don't worry. We'll do the interview and get you on that plane in time. I'll give you exactly what you need.

Patty: Great. Okay, I just had to get that off my chest.

Mary: That's good.

[Slight pause. Patty wonders why Mary says "that's good"]

Patty: So.

[She collects herself, ruffles through her notes "professionally," then starts the tape]

Let's start with some background. First of all, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Mary: Well, I'm 43, and I'm the mother of 11 kids.

Patty: 11 kids? Holy shit, that's a lot of kids.

Mary: Just a minute.

[Mary shuts off the tape]

Are you supposed to be swearing on tape?

Patty: Was I swearing?

Mary: You said, "Holy shit."

Patty: Oh, jeez!

Mary: That's okay.

[Patty rewinds the tape and starts over]

Patty: Now, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

[Bird enters without being noticed by Patty and Mary. He sets a broken hockey stick against the wall. He stops abruptly when he sees them talking. He follows the conversation very closely]

Mary: I'm 43, and I'm the mother of 11 kids.

Patty: Ho-ly, that's a lot of kids.

Mary: I had twelve, but I lost one.

Patty: So, when exactly did you have your first one? You must have been pretty young.

Mary: I was 16.

Patty: Yeah, that's pretty young. And how old are they now?

Mary: Well, the oldest is 26. And the next one is 24, and then the next ones are 22, 20, 19, 17 —

[Bird is counting them off on his fingers]

16, 14, 12, and 10. Is that 11?

[Patty and Bird at the same time]

Bird: That's only 10 —

Patty: That's only 10 —

Mary: Bird —

Bird: Yeah? —

Mary: What are you doing here? —

Patty: Yeah, what's he doing here? —

Bird: That dog's outside again.

Mary: Which dog?

Bird: That dog of Henry Joseph's.

Mary: Ohh, that damn dog —

[She jumps up and rushes out]

Patty: But wait —

Mary: I'll be right back —

Patty: What about the inter —

Bird: She's just gonna chase that dog back to Henry Joseph's.

[Patty groans]

Patty: What's she doing that for?

Bird: Oh, that dog just pisses everywhere – on the house, in the yard, on the woodpile. In fact, if you stand around too long in one place, you know what he'll do?

Patty: No. What'll he do?

Bird: He'll piss on you.

Patty: Oh, God. What's wrong with this place?

Bird: I don't know. What do you mean?

Patty: I mean, dogs don't normally go around pissing on people.

Bird: Well, he's a mean old dog, and he hates strangers – especially white ones.

[Bird points his finger at Patty]

Patty: I'm not white —

Bird: You're close enough —

Patty: I'm Metis —

Bird: Same thing. That dog can't tell the difference. He'll tear you apart, limb from limb.

[Bird growls ferociously in Patty's face]

With his bare teeth.

Patty: Jesus, man, you don't have to breathe all over me.

Bird: But, hey, don't worry. Just carry a big stick when you go out.

Patty: For what?

Bird: For pro-tec-tion. See that hockey stick?

Patty: That's not a big stick.

Bird: It's big enough. When he comes at you —

[Bird lunges at Patty with the stick]

Just jab him between the eyes. He won't bite you then. "Down, boy, down!"

Patty: Hey, put that stick down. You're liable to poke my eyes out.

Bird: Rea-lly? Hey, what's this?

[Bird pokes at the tape recorder with his stick]

Patty: It's a tape recorder. And it's an expensive one, too. So, stop poking it.

Bird: Oh, sor-ry.

Patty: I'm doing an interview.

Bird: Oh yeah, on what?

Patty: Who knows?

Bird: You're doing an interview, and you don't know what it's on?

Patty: It's on resi-den-tial schools.

[Patty shuts off the tape]

Bird: Hey, don't shut it off. I could tell you a few stories about that.

Patty: I'm doing the interview with Mary, and she's coming right back.

Bird: You never know. You gotta fill that tape up with something. Don't you?

Patty: Right.

[She looks at Bird, thinking for a moment. She starts the tape]

Okay, go ahead. Let's hear your story. It better be good.

Bird: O-kay.

[Bird rubs his hands together in anticipation. Patty turns away. When Bird doesn't say anything, Patty looks back. Bird is sitting – thinking. Patty shuts off the tape]

Patty: Well, are you gonna start that story or what?

Bird: Just a minute, I'm thinking. What's your problem?

Patty: No problem. I've got no problems at all. I've got all the time in the world.

Bird: That's good, cause so do I.

[Patty checks her watch, annoyed]

[Bird stands up from the table. This is his moment. He performs his story with lots of energy and movement. He

speaks directly to the audience]

Bird: This one time, they showed us a movie about Jesus, eh? And so the next day, all the kids went around shouting, "Hey, let's go play Jesus." They tell this one kid, "Okay, you're gonna be the King of the Jews, eh. So we're gonna have to crucify you." Hey, I just thought of something.

Patty: What?

Bird: You wanna be Jesus?

Patty: No, I don't wanna be Jesus.

Bird: You wanna do the crucifying then?

Patty: No, I don't wanna do any crucifying – unless it's you. Look, I'm just about at the end of my rope —

Bird: Okay, okay. So they take some wood and they make a cross, eh. And, then, they make him carry it across the playground – just like this. Hey, you watching this?

Patty: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[Bird turns back to the audience. He holds the hockey stick behind his neck like it's a cross, his arms stretched out. He walks as though he's carrying a great weight]

Bird: And then they start whipping him with willow branches – Hey, aren't you gonna start whipping me?

Patty: No, what are you? Nuts?

Bird: Looks like I'm gonna have to do it all by myself.

[He makes whipping sounds]

Annhhhh!

[A whip]

Unnnhhh!

[A whip]

Ooonnh!

And then they tie him to a tree. But, just then, the whistle blows —

[He whistles]

and all the kids go running in.

Patty: Why? What for?

Bird: They were going for lunch. Little kids get hungry, don't you know that?

Patty: What, so they took off and just left him up there – hanging?

Bird: Yah, they left him up there – to suffer.

[Mary enters. Bird and Patty can't see her. Bird is still hanging on the cross – to great effect]

And there was no one there to comfort him —

[Mary washes his face and chest, his wounds. Bird responds to her, although in reality she isn't there. Mary is helping Bird in the way that Bird helped that boy]

He was crying when I found him – all tied up to that tree, wearing that crown of thorns.

[Mary helps him down from the cross. She gives him the stick and backs away]

Patty: Good thing you heard him crying, eh.

Bird: Yah. He could've died on that cross. Just like Jesus. Them priests told us that Jesus was a man who knew how to suffer, and they told us to be just like him.

Here. Feel this.

[He forces the stick into Patty's hands. She holds the stick in a way that suggests it's going to be used for beating]

They used to beat us with broken hockey sticks. With our own sticks. Just like that one there. And they used to shave our heads for getting into mischief. You know why they used to do that? To humiliate us. To make us suffer.

[Spotlight on Bird. He speaks to the audience]

I used to think that place was haunted, that school. I used to have a dream, this nightmare, about having no mom and dad.

I'd get scared.

And I'd wake up in the dark in the middle of the night.

And I'd want my mom and dad. I'd want them there to hold me. But they were never there. Just like in my dream. I'd wake up, and I'd still be in my nightmare.

My mom and dad took care of us really good, you know. They loved us a lot. That was the hardest part. Being apart from your mom. That's what hurt the most.

Cause that's where you come from, eh – as an infant baby. You come from your mom.

[The drummer enters. He kneels before Bird and sings a healing song using a rattle. At some point in the song, Bird kneels. When the song is over, the drummer exits. Bird goes to Mary. She puts her hand on Bird's shoulder to comfort him. A tableau. Light returns. Patty turns off the tape. She speaks to the audience]

Patty: My boss at the radio station told me before I came up that he wanted me to get something that would "resonate" with a wide audience. I want this interview to speak to that 42 year-old white, chartered accountant who's sitting there with his hands behind his head going:

[Patty looks at Bird]

"Okay. So? You've had a hard life. You've gone to residential school. You lost your childhood, your parents, your culture. So? What's that gotta do with me? I never did anything to you."

[Bird sees Patty]

"Why don't you just go out and get yourself a frigging job, you bum? Instead of taking the taxpayers' hard-earned money."

Bird: I gotta go now.

Patty: That's what I believed – a year ago. For me, healing was something you try to get your dog to do when you're out hunting: "Heel, boy, heel."

Mary: Bird, where you going?

Bird: To get some cigarettes.

Mary: Here. Get yourself a pack.

[Mary sees the tension between Bird and Patty. Bird is glaring at Patty. Mary steps between Bird and Patty. She gives him some money]

And on your way out, can you set that pot of stew out to cool? I'll feed you when you get back.

Bird: Okay, I will.

[They watch Bird leave. Patty speaks to the audience]

Patty: Bird left, and I could tell that he still had something more to say. He was a lot like me in that way – he had things to talk about, but he had a hard time saying them. And then Mary started talking about the sister she'd lost at school. And it made me think about my own life. About losing someone precious, someone like my own grandma.

[She sits down at the table and turns on the tape. She turns to Mary as if she's just asked her a question. They are in mid-interview]

Mary: I lost a sister there. She was only six years old – just a baby. And I was only nine years old myself. The sad thing is, I felt that it was my responsibility. You see, when mom sent us off to school, she took me out on a walk – just the two of us – and she told me:

"Take care of your sister. Take care of her good."

And that's what I really wanted to do.

But that winter my sister got sick. I remember walking into the sanatorium with my sister. It was a strange place. We sat there for hours, just waiting and waiting. And when they finally took her in and walked her down that long hallway, she started crying, and I could hear her crying all the way down that long hallway. She looked so small and helpless. And when they turned that corner, I could hear her calling for me:

"Mary, Come and get me, Mary."

I used to ask for her every day. And then they told me – she'd passed away.

But then in March – about two weeks after they told me she'd died – they told me she was still alive. So when I went back home, I gathered up all her stuff to take home with me. I took her clothes, her little things, her little bag made out of scraps of old jeans. She had a teddy bear, and I took that home, and when I ran up to my mom, I was holding that teddy bear: "Mom, look I got her teddy bear." But my mom never said a word.

So, then I asked her:

"Where's my little sister?"

And my mom just looked away.

That was at the end of June. And then in July, we heard she'd passed away. My little sister. Just a baby.

I knew my mom blamed me.

Patty: Your mom blamed you?

Mary: Yes. I didn't go back to school that fall. I went north instead with my parents, and my mom would take me out for long walks. I'd follow her around in the bush, but it was like I wasn't there. She ignored me. She was grieving for my sister. Late in November, it was getting cold, and there was a lot of snow that year. I was trailing her in the bush one day. We must have walked for miles, and I was getting really tired. I remember sitting down in the snow, on my knees, calling her. I kept calling to her to wait, and she kept on walking. Like she didn't hear me at all.

[She drops to her knees]

"Mom. Come and get me, Mom."

Finally, after about an hour, she came back. And that's when she cried. All those months she'd cry, but it was a silent cry. But that time, she came back, and she cried. She just held me, and she cried.

[Mary holds herself, rocking slightly. She finally gets up. Patty stands parallel to Mary. The song ends. They will speak to the audience]

Patty: I wanted to reach out and shut that tape machine off. I wanted to tell her to stop. I wanted to catch my plane and get outta there. I wanted to leave, but I didn't want to go back home either. I didn't know what was wrong with me.

[She takes out rosary beads from her pocket]

The only thing I've got left from my grandma are these rosary beads. The ones she had at residential school. She never talked about it – that school. She only told me one story about it.

Mary: In the fall of 1965, I went back to the Guy Hill Indian Residential School in The Pas. During my years there, I felt a lot of pain. At being taken away from my parents. Crying didn't help. When you cried, you were punished. You didn't have time to be lonely there. They didn't let you be lonely. Your feelings were your own, and you kept them inside. You never told anyone how you felt.

Patty: It must have haunted her, my grandma. She told me about a six-year-old girl she knew at school. That girl was lonely, so lonely she used to cry.

Mary: We used to pray. We got up and we prayed. Before school, before meals, before bed, we used to pray.

Patty: She used to cry and cry and cry.

Mary: Pray and pray and pray.

Patty: And finally one night —

Mary: What happened to that girl?

Patty: One night, one of the nuns went up to that girl's bed —

Mary: And what happened to that girl?

Patty: She was crying and sobbing, and she wanted her mom, and that nun, that nun took that girl's pillow —

Mary: And what did she do?

Patty: She smothered that girl. To make her stop crying.

Mary: To this day, I can't even bring myself to say: *"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of —"*

[Patty sets the beads down on the table. Mary pours coffee for them. They sit down at the table. Mary picks up the beads. By picking up the beads, Mary will be asking Patty a question]

[Patty drinks her coffee, preparing to speak. The coffee cup reminds her of her drinking]

Patty: On the day of my grandma's funeral, I started drinking. Hard. Every day after that. It was such a sad time, yet I didn't feel anything. I just looked at that coffin going down into the ground and walked away with those beads in my hand.

[Patty gets up from the table. She takes the beads with her and keeps them in her fist. She speaks to the audience]

Right after that my uncles took me to the bar, and I met up with my dad there. He was drunk already. So, what the hell – I started drinking to catch up with him. And everything that was wrong with my dad and my life disappeared as the night went on. I felt like I was with all my best friends. Drinking whiskey and telling stories. I was slapping everyone on the back as if I'd known them all my life. And everything was just fine until that goddam Peter Jovanovich stood up and shouted at my dad:

"All you half-assed halfbreeds should go back to the bush where you belong!"

And, that's when I snapped.

"Peter Jovanovich, you dirty miserable bohunk. I'll teach you to talk about my dad like that! I'll send you back to Europe or wherever the hell you came from!"

I was the first one up to take a swing at that ditchdigger. I was there, on the front lines of Batoche, low on ammunition and high on whiskey. I was leading a gang of fearless Metis rebels who all had visions of Christ that night.

"Come on, boys. The wages of sin is – Death!"

The last thing I remember was steel bars and a cold concrete floor. I got to know that floor real good that night. Every mark on that dirty floor. There in that cell.

And when I finally came to – my head pounding and my guts burning up – I opened my eyes, and there in my hand were my grandma's beads.

[She opens her hand and lets the beads dangle]

And that's where it began.

Mary: That's where what began?

Patty: The day of my grandma's funeral – the day it all started coming back. All those years. All that hurt.

[The sound of a dog barking fiercely. Bird rushes in]

Bird: That dog's got the stew! —

Mary: He's what? —

Bird: He took the stew! —

Mary: Where'd you put it? —

Bird: On that pile of wood —

Mary: How'd he get up there? —

Bird: I don't know. He's a big dog —

Mary: I know he's a big dog —

Bird: He was standing on the woodpile, trying to get the lid off —

Patty: Why didn't you scare him off? —

Bird: I didn't have my stick. And he was growling.

Mary: He's always growling.

Bird: I tried to get that pot, but he was gonna bite my hand off.

Mary: No, he just wanted that stew.

Bird: No, he wanted my hand. And then he jumped down with it. He had the pot by the handle.

Patty: What, in his paw?

Bird: No, not in his paw. In his teeth. Like this.

[He demonstrates]

He went running down that road back to Henry Joseph's, carrying it in his teeth.

Mary: Well, don't just stand there. Go after him then.

Bird: I am, I am. I'm gonna get that stew back!

[He grabs the stick and jabs it at Patty as if he's jabbing the dog]

And I'll smoke that dog right between the eyes.

[He's out the door]

Mary: Wait, Bird. What about those smokes?

[Bird pops his head back in]

Bird: I don't have them.

[He leaves again]

Mary: Where are they?

[He pops back in]

Bird: I don't know.

[He leaves]

Mary: What do you mean, you don't know?

[He pops back in]

Bird: I gave them away. I don't know where they are but, don't worry, I'll get that stew back.

[Bird exits]

Mary: I-yi-yi-yi – that Bird and that dog are gonna put me in the grave yet.

Patty: Yeah, and that's it for me. I'm done. Finished.

[The light changes. Mary goes to the door to follow Bird's exit. Patty starts shuffling her papers, putting them in order. She's getting ready to leave. Mary turns back and watches her carefully. The drummer enters. He performs a song that acknowledges Patty's state of mind – her feeling of failure and pain. The drummer finishes and exits]

[Mary walks to the table. She picks up the rosary beads, thinking as she holds them. When Patty moves to get up, Mary stares at her until she slowly sits back down. The light changes back]

Mary: Let me get some more coffee.

Patty: But what about the plane?

[Mary touches Patty's hand. Patty tenses and pulls her hand away. Mary touches Patty's hand again]

I'll get more coffee.

[Mary gets coffee]

Patty: Something kept me there. Mary. Her touch. The way she touched my hand. I've never had anyone touch me like that before.

[Mary returns and listens]

I remember when I was a kid, lying in bed one night, under my grandma's thick quilt, thinking about my parents: Where are they? Why can't they look after me? Why can't they be like other parents? My grandma loved me, but she never said it. She never hugged me. She never touched me.

[Mary returns with coffee and sits]

Mary: She grew up without parents. She never learned how to be close, how to touch someone. Her parents were priests and nuns. That's who she learned from.

Patty: I woke up every morning, thinking:
"I can't get up. I just wanna lie here and never get up."

Mary: I used to have that same feeling when I was a girl at residential school. But I had a special place I used to go to. The hallway of the dorm.

I used to do the polishing in there. I'd mop and then sweep and then mop, and then I'd polish it. Every day. I'd make it shine, and I'd be proud of it. "Look, I did that. That long hallway."

And when I was going through my healing, my thoughts would go back to that place. Because I was safe there in that hallway. There was nobody there to tell me what to do. I knew exactly how that hallway was structured. I knew every scar on that floor. Which spot would come out, which one wouldn't. But this is what was even more important. I could make things better there.

I was in another world in that hallway. A world that I could make perfect again.

[Pause]

Patty: Perfect. Yeah, but how can you ever make things perfect again? You can't.

Mary: That's true, but you can make things better – if you talk about it.

Patty: By talking about it? —

Mary: You can start healing those wounds. The whole story of my life, when I look back, is very interesting. I can see it clearly now. I have a better understanding of it. Why? Because I've tried to deal with it. I haven't kept it all hidden inside. I had to go through a lot of pain to be able to sit here with you and talk the way I am about all that pain and abuse. You can't be afraid or ashamed to talk about your life.

Patty: I dunno. Why can't we just talk about something else?

Mary: Like what?

Patty: I dunno. The good times. You must have a few good memories, don't you? Didn't you ever have any good times. Why can't we talk about that?

Mary: Sure we can. The best time of the year was when you were ready to go home. The kids would get so excited, they couldn't sleep. Some of our parents lived in Misty Lake, out in the fish camps, and they wouldn't be able to come and get you right away. So we'd have to wait. Maybe they'd be coming in today or tomorrow, right after dinner. It was like your mom and dad are camping over there by now! And then your mom and dad are camping over here! I used to meet them down at the lake, and that was the happiest moment, when the boats came in and you could run into the arms of your mom and dad —

[The sound of a plane coming in]

Patty: What's that?

Mary: That's a plane.

Patty: Don't tell me that's my plane.

Mary: That's your plane.

Patty: That's my plane?! It's two hours early!

Mary: You're lucky it's in at all.

Patty: I'm lucky it's in at all? What's that supposed to mean. I can't believe it. Everything's either two hours early or two hours late. Hasn't anyone ever heard of a schedule around here?

Mary: Look at it this way. If there's no schedule, then everything's on time.

Patty: Everything's on time? Oh, my God, I can't stand it anymore.

[She puts on her vest]

Mary: You're leaving?

Patty: Yes, I'm leaving.

Mary: What about the interview?

Patty: I don't care about the interview.

Mary: What about your job?

Patty: I don't care about my job. As a matter of fact, I don't care about anything right now.

Mary: No?

Patty: No.

Mary: Why not?

Patty: Well, because —

[She raises her arm angrily and accidentally flings her papers into the air. The papers scatter. She throws up her arms]

Shit!

Mary: Looks like you need some help.

Patty: Yes, I need some help. I need some help getting away from this hell hole!

Mary: Yes, you better get back home where you belong.

Patty: Home. I don't even have that.

Mary: Why not?

Patty: Because I left my family two weeks ago, that's why not.

Mary: What happened?

Patty: In the past month, I've lost my grandma, and then my husband, and my kids. I might as well lose my job and make a clean break of it. God!

Mary: Listen to you.

Patty: What.

Mary: You're no different from my kids.

Patty: What do your kids have to do with it?

Mary: You think I don't know you? I can tell you've had a rough life.

Patty: Right.

Mary: Maybe you grew up hating the fact that you were Metis – a halfbreed.

Patty: [No reply]

[She's making a poor effort to collect her papers]

Mary: Maybe you were put down by the whites and ignored by the other side. Maybe you still haven't dealt with it yet.

Patty: I know what I've been through.

Mary: But have you dealt with it?

Patty: Yes.

Mary: Have you?

Patty: Yes!

[Mary stands over Patty]

Now, just get off my back! I've gotta catch my plane.

[Mary waits]

Mary: You've already missed it.

Patty: Oh, God!

[Patty drops her papers again and sinks to the floor in despair, everything in chaos]

Mary: Here.

Patty: What?

Mary: Get up.

Patty: Can't.

Mary: Yes, you can.

Patty: No, I can't.

Mary: Now, here. You can't go through life lying down like a whipped dog.

Patty: I'm not a dog.

Mary: No. Look at you. Here.

[Mary pulls Patty up]

Patty: Don't you quit?

Mary: No. Never. Now, I'll tell you what I had to deal with. I'll tell you what I had to go through before I could sit down inside my own house, and talk to you like this.

[Mary takes out her rosary beads. She sets them down on the table beside the beads of Patty's grandma]

These are my beads from the residential school. And every time I put those beads in my hands, it all comes back to me. Maybe it was the same for your grandma. Maybe that's what she's handed down to you. Her legacy from school.

[Patty looks at Mary]

Sit down, Patty. You came out of that system, two generations later.

[She sits down reluctantly. Mary starts the tape]

I'll tell you what it was like when I first got out. You have to re-learn everything.

Patty: Like what?

Mary: Your relationships with your sisters and your brothers, your mother and father. You have to start over and learn everything – because you've never had a home.

Patty: If you have to start over, then who teaches you?

Mary: You teach yourself. Because our parents never talked. Did yours?

Patty: No.

Mary: My mom never talked to me about relationships. I didn't know how to take care of a baby. I was only 16 when I had my first baby. I cried when he was crying and needed a change of diapers. I didn't know what to do. There was nobody around to teach me.

Patty: So what about the father? What was he doing the whole time?

Mary: He didn't know how to raise a family either. He grew up with violence, thinking that was normal. So I found myself in a situation where I had to be abused. And it went on for years and years, and that's when I started drinking. To cope. To numb the pain. Maybe like you've been doing?

Patty: Me?

Mary: By drinking?

Patty: [No reply]

Mary: By leaving your home?

Patty: [No reply]

Mary: By leaving your kids behind? The ones who love you? Have you become your father?

Patty: [No reply]

Mary: I'm not blaming you. I'm just saying that's the way we cope sometimes. I coped by drinking.

Patty: And it was really that bad?

Mary: It was really bad. I'd think: what's the easiest way to get out of this mess?

Patty: Suicide?

Mary: I tried it once.

Patty: And you lived.

Mary: I had to. My kids needed me. But I'm lucky to be alive today because you reach the point where you know your life is stake. How do you think it feels to have someone pull out a .30-30 and point it at you, saying:

"One word comes out of you, and you're dead."

Or to have somebody sitting there with a knife, a hunting knife, ready to slash your throat.

Your partner knows he's losing control of your life. His "possession" is being violated. But he's not fighting the one he should be fighting. He's fighting the one he's trying to keep – to the point where he's ready to kill you in order to keep you. If I didn't fight back, I wouldn't be here today.

Patty: Why? What did you do?

Mary: I stopped him.

[A deep red light]

I was getting ready to wash some clothes one day. He'd been out drinking for a few days, and then he came back home and started drinking with his friends. I had a stove there, and I was heating up some water – it was almost boiling. He asked me to go get him a drink, and I told him, "No, you go get it yourself." Then he came up to the stove and took that boiling water and threw it on the floor – right where the kids were playing. My little ones. I reached down and grabbed them up, and then I chased everyone out of the house. I was screaming at the top of my lungs: "Get out! just get out!" I was so angry with this man, who was inflicting abuse on me and now on the kids. I was so blinded by my anger that I went after him.

They took off on their ski-doos, but I knew where they were going. I remember this one girl telling me, "You scared me when you walked into that house. You had a knife in your hand." All she heard me say was,

"Where is he?"

And she pointed like this into the living room, and I walked in there, and I took that knife, and I walked right up to him, right were he was sitting. He didn't move. He watched me coming, and I came up to him, my drunken husband, who tried to hurt my kids, and I stuck it in him.

[The light changes]

He didn't die, and I didn't go to jail. But he knew he'd lost.

I don't accept violence. I hate violence. But in the situation I was in, that's all I could do. If I'd listened to the stories and the teachings, maybe I could have done it differently. It was the start of getting out.

I've had twelve kids, and I've had my home torn apart. I've seen the effects of alcohol and abuse. I've had one sister die, a brother who was murdered, and another one who committed suicide. I've had to relive that pain. I've had to suffer. But that's part of the healing. Healing is about learning how to suffer. You can never stop the pain completely. You'll always experience pain and suffering. When you're drinking. When you become violent. When you try to hide it all inside yourself, you're trying to stop the pain.

Healing comes by telling your story to others. By doing that, you give permission to others to do the same. What starts out as your own story becomes a story that belongs to someone else, like you.

Right now, I need to know that everyone in my family is helping each other. We have to respect each other – and protect each other. If we're going to survive, then someone has to set the path, someone has to say: there's a way out.

[The sound of the dog howling. Mary gets up to check. Bird enters, shirt torn. He has the stew and a tuft of dog fur]

Bird: I got the stew!

Mary: Looks like you got more than that.

[Bird holds up the tuft of fur]

Bird: Yeah, and I got some dog fur, too.

[He throws it down]

He got mad about that.

Mary: I wonder why?

Bird: Cause I just ripped it right out of him.

Mary: Yeah, that would get him mad.

Bird: Oh yeah, he was pretty upset.

Mary: Guess he ripped your shirt, too.

Bird: Yeah, he was trying to bite me.

Mary: I can see that.

Bird: He didn't want to give up that stew.

Mary: No, I guess not.

Bird: You make good stew. Even the dogs like it.

Mary: Thanks for the compliment. Are you hungry yet?

[Mary takes the pot]

Bird: Yeah, I could eat the whole pot.

[Mary lifts the lid]

Mary: What happened to the stew?

Bird: I don't know. What happened to it?

Mary: There's only half a pot here.

Bird: Oh. Well, the dog was eating it.

Mary: The dog was eating it?

Bird: That's how I caught up to him.

Mary: How?

Bird: He stopped to eat.

Mary: Well, we can't eat this now.

Bird: No?

Mary: I'll have to make a new pot.

Bird: There's still half a pot there.

Mary: That's okay.

Bird: I can take that stew, if you want.

Mary: Don't worry. I'll make some extra for you.

Patty: Have some coffee, Bird.

Bird: Thanks – Hey, what are you doing here? And what happened in here? Was there a fight?

Patty: Not really.

Bird: What a mess. It looks like hell.

Patty: Yeah, it does, doesn't it?

Bird: Hey, I heard your plane take off.

Patty: Yeah, I missed it. But at least I got my interview.

Bird: You know what? I got something more for your tape.

Patty: Oh yeah?

Bird: Yeah, when I heard that dog howling – all of a sudden, it reminded me of something.

Patty: Of what?

Bird: You want to hear it?

Patty: Sure, let's hear it.

[Bird waits]

Okay, you can start any time.

Bird: Aren't you gonna record it?

Patty: Oh, sorry about that.

[Patty starts the tape]

Bird: So we saw a movie one time where the soldiers were pouring hot tar over the castle walls. They were shouting:

"Hot tar! Hot tar!"

So anyway a few days later, these two boys were running away from a priest, and they ran right up a tree. That priest was yelling:

"If you little brats don't come down right now, I'll have to come up there and get you!"

But those little kids wouldn't come down, so that priest started climbing up there. All of a sudden, those kids started yelling,

"Hot water! Hot water!"

And then that priest jumped down and started howling —

[Bird throws his head back and howls]

Just like that dog of Henry Joseph's.

Patty: How come?

Bird: How come?

[Bird demonstrates – from the chair]

Bird: Cause they were pissing all over him.

Patty: It must have got that priest pretty mad.

Bird: Yeah, he started speaking French.

Mary: Ah, Bird, how'd you ever survive that school?

[Pause]

Bird: You want to know how?

I used to go down to the cliffs. Over by the swimming hole there near the school. And I'd sit there, looking out over the lake. I just kept thinking to myself: one day I won't be here no more. I'll be out at Misty Lake. Out on the island, setting up the fish camp. It'd be a hot summer day, and there wouldn't be a cloud in the sky. And everything would be just fine again.

Mary: That's where I went, too, you know. Five years ago.

I'd ask myself: "*If this is happening to me, what can I do to make it better? What can I do to change it?*"

When I looked at it that way, I went out to Misty Lake and I cried and I laid in the snow and I looked up at those stars so far away, and I thought to myself:

"I put myself into this mess. If there's a way in, there has to be a way out."

That's the night I started my journey, my healing path, from out on the frozen ice at Misty Lake.

[Short pause]

I'll take you out there sometime, Patty. During fish camp. How about this summer?

Patty: This summer?

Mary: Why not? I can show you how we fish, and maybe you can tell me a few stories this time. Maybe you've got a few to tell, eh?

[Patty speaks to the audience]

Patty: She was right. I needed to go out there to Misty Lake. To take stock. To remember. To heal those wounds of mine. The ones I didn't even know I had.

[The drummer enters]

And now I'm here again, looking back over my life, seeing it more clearly now – without trying to deny what I've been through, what's brought me here to this point. I've had to look hard at myself, to look beyond myself, to go after something higher in life, and to think about others for the first time ever. For once in my life, I'm trying to do all that.

Here I am, getting ready to go out to Misty Lake again. And maybe, in time, my hope is that we'll all have a chance to meet someone like Mary and visit a place like Misty Lake.

[Drumming comes up. Lights fade. Blackout]

End

Challenges of Respecting Indigenous World Views in Eurocentric Education

James [Sa'ke'j] Youngblood Henderson

Canadian educators daily ask that Aboriginal peoples acquiesce to or fit within the Canadian version of Eurocentrism. It is a common struggle to all colonized Indigenous peoples around the earth. They ask that we either achieve within the Eurocentric model of education or live a life of poverty and welfare. If we do not fully immerse ourselves in Eurocentric education, we are called "uneducated." In one way or another, we are being forced to validate the colonialists' mythology. We are being forced to affirm alien values and to sacrifice Aboriginal world views and values for norms outside traditional cultural aims.

Canadian education systems continue to assert that assimilation within Eurocentric thought is the best path for Aboriginal people. The penalties are high for refusing to conform to Eurocentric thought. It is perceived that Canadian society will exclude us from the benefits of Canadian society, if we refuse to affirm to their version of society. In effect, the system forces us to give up our inherent and constitutional rights to Aboriginal ecological order and world view, and our ability to teach future generations. It forces us to recognize and affirm a Eurocentric and individualistic educational system that perpetuates colonialism's iron law. Jean-Paul Sartre noted the existence of an "iron law which denied the oppressed all weapons which he did not personally steal from the oppressor" (Sartre, in Noel, 1994, p. 147). Their iron law forces us to be someone we are not. Yet, when we ask them to respect our world views, this simple request is most often regarded as engaging in conflict.

Such assimilation schemes are unacceptable to most Aboriginal peoples. They are based upon false premises that prevent any discussion of Aboriginal world views in Eurocentric education systems. Aboriginal educators must create new premises as well as discover traditional approaches upon which to build for the next seventh generation.

In the early stages of fighting for basic survival, we were forced to accept

Eurocentric world views and their analysis. Speaking as the first generation of Eurocentric educated Chickasaw and Tsistsistis (Cheyenne) male, I intimately remember that force, and live with the effects. Most Aboriginal students remember these experiences, even if they do not want to.

We were unaware that the Eurocentric knowledge systems do not have an existence independent of their hierarchical relations in an artificial order. We were not aware that Eurocentric thought rejects the idea of intelligible spirits or essences in an ecological order, which are the foundation of Aboriginal knowledge. The intelligible spirits are called respectively among the Algonquian languages as *matu, manidoo, manito, manitu*, or *manitou*. We were not aware that human purposes are the foundation of Eurocentric knowledge. Only gradually did we understand that we could not succeed in Eurocentric knowledge if we questioned their superiority or privileges. To succeed, we had to learn, by memory, their artificial order. To learn their order, we had to master their history and thought. And we had to polish the genius of the dead European male scholar in our essays and thoughts. Only gradually did we learn that one cannot win at a game with rigged rules that are likely to change when the colonized discover how they work. Forced to look inward for a secure cognitive foundation, the educated colonized learn to know their Aboriginal heritage and identity.

Some of us went to Eurocentric law school to learn how to change the rules, only to be told they could not change them at all. Yet, we found ways to change them embedded in their own teachings.

Memmi (1965) recounts the colonial education process, as familiar to Aboriginal peoples:

> And [the colonized] who has the wonderful good luck to be accepted in a school will not be saved nationally. The memory which is assigned him is certainly not that of his people. The history which is taught him is not his own. ... He and his land are nonentities ... or referenced to what he is not. ... The colonized is saved from illiteracy only to fall into linguistic dualism. ... In the colonial context, bilingualism is necessary. ... But while the colonial bilingualist is saved from being walled in, he suffers a cultural catastrophe which is never completely overcome. ... Suppose that he has learned to manage his language to the point of re-creating it in written works; for whom shall he write, for what public? If he persists in writing in his language, he forces himself to speak before an audience of deaf men. ... It is a curious fact to write for a people other than one's own, and it is even stranger to write to the conquerors of one's people. ... As soon as they dare speak, what will they tell just those people, other than of their malaise and revolt?

Next, we realized that to acquire dignity and reassert our humanity as Aboriginal thinkers, "educated" Indians had to critique Eurocentrism. We also realized the need to assert our Aboriginal world views and our ecological orders. We had to live with the ambiguity of thinking against our educated consciousness. This sacrifice was necessary for the future generations. If educated Aboriginal people did not protect their world views, language, and heritage, cultural extinction would occur in a few decades. If we did not acknowledge and restore our world views, languages, and heritage, our education would accomplish the goal that military force, missionaries, and poverty could not accomplish. More than restore respect of Aboriginal world views and languages, we had to develop new syntheses of knowledge to lead the existing education system into a post-colonial era.

Eurocentric thinkers rarely understand the elegance of Aboriginal thought and do not question the negative myths of colonial thought. They easily conclude that Aboriginal knowledge, consciousness, and languages are irrelevant to contemporary Canadian thought. They see them as life worlds without systems. Yet, when one aspires to decolonize or empower Aboriginal peoples, these neglected concerns contain the authority to heal Aboriginal identity and communities. Restoring Aboriginal world views and language is essential to realizing Aboriginal solidarity and power.

Paulo Freire, A Brazilian social reformer and educator, has argued that only within the existing participatory relationship with natural, cultural, and historical realities can people be educated. He also argues that a critical consciousness of the cultural and historical roots of a people, as understood and expressed by them, is the foundation of their cultural emancipation. Moreover, he asserts that reformers must begin with the way a group talks about their world. Thus, fundamental to any Aboriginal emancipation, existing Aboriginal world views, languages, knowledge, customary orders, and laws have to be validated by Canadian institutions and thought. Aboriginal people cannot know who they are through the structure of alien language. If they do not know who they are, and what their gifts and visions are, they remain trapped in Eurocentric context and discourse forever.

Let us look at the issue of respecting Indigenous world views in Eurocentric education from the perspectives of contextuality. Contextuality animates modern thought and education. Then, we will look at the Eurocentric obstacles to respecting Aboriginal world views within the Canadian education system.

The Idea of Contextuality

Faced with competing world views, the concepts of paradigms or context is important. In attempting to understand the natural order of the world, Kuhn (1962),[1] a historian of science, has explained the process of intellectual transformations in the sciences as "paradigm shifts." Periodically, in science, natural phenomena (often called "anomalies"), that scientists cannot explain by reference to the basic assumptions of established science, are discovered to have a unity that requires fundamentally new postulates. The new explanatory unity and its postulates are the substance of a new scientific paradigm. The paradigm shifts in the history of science, from the Copernican to the Newtonian, and from the Newtonian to the Einsteinian, demonstrate how radically explanations of how the world works can change over time.

In the humanities, social sciences, education and law, such explanatory paradigms are called "contexts." Eurocentric contexts can be either natural or artificial, but most are artificial. Thus, they are called contexts. The Brazilian social philosopher Roberto Unger (1984) [2] has asserted that, if a context allows people to move within it to discover everything about the world they can discover, it is a natural context. If the context does not allow such movement, it is artificial. Shifts in contexts are called "revolutions" or "transformations."

Three theses define the modernist or Eurocentric contexts of ideas and actions. The first thesis is the principle of contextuality. Contextuality is the belief that assumptions or desires that humans take as given will shape people's mental and social lives. These artificial givens can be either institutional or imaginative. Either way, these assumptions form the limits of the artificial context. Thus, almost all modern thought and activity are conditional. These artificial assumptions form a picture of what the world is really like, and even a set of premises about how thoughts and languages are or can be structured. They also provide the framework for explaining and verifying world views.

The second thesis is that all artificial contexts can be broken. The third thesis is that the conditionality of an artificial context creates "normalcy;" thus, remains relatively immune to activities that bring it into question or that open it up to revision and conflict (Unger, 1984). An artificial context can be supplemented or revised by other empowering assumptions or ideas about features that make one explanatory or society-making practice better than another. Small-scale, routine adjustments in a social and education context have the capacity to turn into a more uncontained transformation. The immunity of a context depends on an awareness of its assumptive conditionality.

Canadian society was created as a human artifact. It was derived from a deliberate artificial context, as opposed to the expression of an underlying natural order. If you forget this contextual truth, then you forget that humans can reinvent it (Unger, 1984,

p. 10). Unger asserts that no social theory or thinker has ever taken the idea of society as artifact to its ultimate conclusion. Most Eurocentric social theories have either ignored this ultimate fact or balanced it with an ambition to develop a lawlike explanation of history, such as Marxism. Most liberating Eurocentric political movements based on lawlike explanations have failed. The failure of these grand narratives has prepared the way for understanding society as artifact. Since Canadian society and educational systems are artificial, Canadians can break loose from established views of themselves as helpless puppets of social realms others have imagined, built, and inhabited, and from law-like forces like social Darwinism, systems of colonial thought that brought these realms into being.

Breaking the colonial context is precisely what the constitutional reforms in Canada and the Declaration of Indigenous Rights by the Indigenous people in international human rights law have attempted to accomplish. They sought to change ordinary consciousness with an extraordinary context-breaking legal act.

By understanding how contexts stick together, come apart, and get remade, Aboriginal educators can disrupt the "implicit, often involuntary alliance between the apologetics of established order, and the explanation of past or present society" (Unger, 1984, p. 5). Also, from our educational experiences, they can teach other educators how to revise the artificial contexts to respect a natural context of Aboriginal education.

All major revision of educational systems depends on our success at diminishing the distance between practical routine and transforming dialogues. Aboriginal empowerment relies on our educators' ability to invent institutions and practices that manifest context-revising freedoms. From an understanding of artificial educational context and their effects, Aboriginal educators can understand how to inspire Aboriginal teachings and traditions into educational contexts to end the domination and oppression that are the residue of colonialism. A constructive understanding of the failure of artificial educational contexts also gives people greater mastery in reconstructing a more equitable educational system.

From this framework, let us turn to the artificial educational context of European colonization, that is Eurocentrism and its strategies.

Eurocentrism

The cognitive and educational legacy of colonization is labelled "Eurocentrism." Eurocentrism is an intellectual and educational movement that postulates the superiority of Europeans over non-Europeans. Eurocentrism has been the dominant artificial educational context for the last five centuries and is an integral part of all existing scholarship. It includes a predatory set of assumptions and beliefs about empirical reality or the world. Habitually educated and usually unprejudiced Europeans accept these assumptions and beliefs as true, as propositions supported by "the facts."

Quebec historian, Lise Noel (1994), has dramatically captured the consequences of this artificial context:

> Alienation is to the oppressed what self-righteousness is to the oppressor. Each really believes that their unequal relationship is part of the natural order of things or desires by some higher power. The dominator does not feel that he is exercising unjust power, and the dominated do not feel the need to withdraw from his tutelage. The dominator will even believe, in all good faith, that he is looking out for the good of the dominated, while the latter will insist that they want an authority more enlightened than their own to determine their fate (p. 79).

A strong critique of Eurocentrism is under way in all fields of social thought (Blaut, 1993). This critique reveals that the assumptions and beliefs that constructed the context are not universal after all. They are not rational. Many are imaginative local knowledge; some are false (Blaut, 1993). These critiques give rise to anguished discourses about knowledge and truths. Quickly, the issue of respecting diversity slips into maintaining Eurocentric unity and canons.

The economic geographer, Jim Blaut (1993), argues that Eurocentrism is, quite simply, the colonizers' model of the world. Eurocentrism is the colonizers' model of the world in a very literal sense; it is not merely a bundle of beliefs. It has evolved, through time, into a finely sculpted model, a structured whole; in fact, an ultra-theory, a general framework for many smaller theories: historical, geographical, psychological, sociological, and philosophical. This ultra-theory is known as diffusionism (Blaut, 1993).

Diffusionism

Diffusionism is the core of Eurocentrism. Its argument has changed through time, but its basic nineteenth-century epistemological framework has remained essentially unchanged. Blaut (1993) argues that diffusionism is based on two axioms: (1) most human communities are uninventive; and (2) a few human communities (or places, or cultures) are inventive and, thus, remain permanent centers of cultural change or progress. On a global scale, this gives us a model of a world with a single civilized center – roughly, Europe – and a surrounding Indigenous periphery (p. 12).

The dualism of an inside and an outside is central to the ultra-theory (Blaut, 1993,

p. 14). The basic framework of diffusionism in its classical form depicts a world divided into two categories, one of which (Greater Europe, Inside) is historical, invents, and progresses; the other of which (non-Europe, Outside) is ahistorical, stagnant, and unchanging and receives progressive innovations by diffusion from Europe. From this base, diffusionism asserts that the difference between the two sectors is that some intellectual or spiritual factor, something characteristic of the "European mind," the "European spirit," "Western Man," and so forth, leads to creativity, imagination, invention, innovation, rationality, and a sense of honor or ethics – in other words, "European values." The reasons for non-Europe's non-progress is a lack of this intellectual or spiritual factor. This proposition asserts that non-European people are empty, or partly so, of "rationality;" that is, of ideas and proper spiritual values.

Classic diffusionism asserts an emptiness of basic cultural institutions and people for much of the non-European world. This is known as the diffusionist myth of emptiness. This idea plays a role in the physical movement of Europeans into non-European regions, displacing or eliminating the native inhabitants. The proposition of emptiness makes a series of claims, each layered upon the others:

1. A non-European region is empty or nearly empty of people (so settlement by Europeans does not displace any Native peoples).

2. The region is empty of settled population: the inhabitants are mobile, nomadic, wanderers (therefore, European settlement violates no political sovereignty, since wanderers make no claim to territory).

3. The cultures of this region do not possess an understanding of private property so the region is empty of property rights and claims (hence colonial occupiers can freely give land to settlers since no one owns it).

4. The final layer, applied to all of the Outside, is an emptiness of intellectual creativity and spiritual values, sometimes described by Europeans as an absence of "rationality" (Blaut, 1993, Chapter 2). [3]

Classic diffusionism also assumes that some non-European regions were "rational" in some ways and to some degree. Thus, for instance, the Middle East, during biblical times, was rational. China was somewhat rational for a certain period in its history. Other regions, always including Africa, are unqualifiedly lacking in rationality.

Diffusionism asserts that the normal and natural way the non-European world progresses or evolves – or changes for the better, modernizes, and so on – is by the diffusion (or spread) of innovative, progressive ideas from Europe, which flow into it as air flows into a vacuum. This flow may take the form of ideas or new products, through which the European values are spread. The Europeans themselves are bearers of these new and innovative ideas.

The diffusion of civilizing ideas from Europe to non-Europe is compensation for the confiscation of material wealth by Europe from non-Europe - although nothing can fully compensate Europeans for their gift of civilization to the colonies since the possibility exists that ancient, atavistic traits will counter-diffuse back into the civilized core, in the form of magical, evil things such as black magic.

The debates between diffusionists and their opponents have been going on for more than a century in anthropology, geography, history, and all fields concerned with long-term, large-scale cultural evolution. [4] The anti-diffusionists (often called "evolutionists" or "independent-inventionists") level two basic charges against the diffusionists: they hold much too sour a view of human ingenuity and they believe in spatial elitism. Yet, anti-diffusionists have failed to grasp the full implication of their critique. None of them denies that the world has an Inside and an Outside. While criticizing the diffusionists for rejecting the psychic unity of humankind, the anti-diffusionists, nonetheless, believe that Europe is the center of cultural evolution. Therefore, they accept the idea – explicitly or implicitly – that Europeans are more inventive and more innovative than everyone else. They make this assumption explicitly when they discuss the modernizing effect of European colonialism. The basic structure of their arguments is the same as that of the diffusionists.

All Eurocentric scholarship is diffusionist since it axiomatically accepts that the world has one permanent center from which culture-changing ideas tend to originate, and a vast periphery that changes as a result (mainly) of diffusion from that single center. This ultra-theory asserts that colonialism brings civilization to non-Europe and is, in fact, the proper way that the non-European world advances out of stagnation. Under colonialism, wealth is drawn out of the colonies and enriches the European colonizers. In Eurocentric diffusionism, Europeans see this as a normal relationship between European and Indigenous peoples. Although Eurocentric diffusionism is constructed on some unjustifiably restrictive assumptions, it nevertheless provides the context for colonial legal and political strategy.

Universalism

Eurocentric thought does not claim to be a privileged norm. This would be an argument about cultural relativism, which asserts that values are about specific cultural contexts.[5] Instead, Eurocentric thought claims to be universal and general.[6] Noel (1994) summarizes the function of universalism in colonialism:

> To present himself as the ideal human type, the dominator often invoked irreducible laws sanctioned by nature, God, or History. In his view, the power he exercised over the oppressed was not so much the result of undue reliance on force as the effect of uncontrollable imperatives, if not a Higher Will. In relation to the universal model that the oppressor seemed to represent, the dominated always appeared to be afflicted with some defect or intrinsic failing (p. 147).

European scholars have always held that their civilization had two sources of inspiration that forbade them to rest content with developing their own society and part of the world. The first inspiration was the search for knowledge. This quest was an outgrowth of the "wonder" that Aristotle found at the beginning of all thought and of the talk in which Socrates sought to engage each person capable and willing to listen. Every discovery was examined for its universality, and life was to be tested by questioning its universal good. This quest for truth, universal values, and virtue informs the idea of the universal civilization, and begins to explain why Europeans left their lands and went to such efforts to discover, as they thought, the whole world and to see it as a "whole" world.

The other reason Europeans could not rest content with perfecting their own part of the world is the messianic prophecy of monotheistic religions. Europeans had a belief in, and a commitment to, a messianic dream of a millennium: a new heaven, a new earth, and a transformed people. The Judaic vision of linear time moved toward a predetermined end. Christianity supplemented this vision with divine commands to the disciples that they had something to do and they were to be about it.[7]

What Socrates and the prophets of the Bible shared is the notion of a universal mission that invites the attention of all humans. It is ironic that national laws of the time attempted to end the idea of this new knowledge and the transformation to a universal civilization. The executions of Socrates and of Christ were both legally sanctioned and, indeed, have served to make subsequent generations suspicious of legal institutions and aware of the inherent contradictions in preserving legal order and doing justice. With these deaths came questions as to the limits and nature of politics and law, which led to the idea of a civil public. Central to the ideal of a civil public is a search for knowledge, truth, and a just legal order.

Universality is really just another aspect of diffusionism, and claiming universality often means aspiring to domination (Noel, 1994, p. 12). Eurocentric universality creates cultural and cognitive imperialism, which establishes a dominant group's knowledge, experience, culture, and language as the universal norm. Dominators or colonizers reinforce their culture and values by bringing the oppressed and the colonized under their expectations and norms. Given the assumed normality of the dominators' values and identity, the dominators construct the differences of the dominated as inferior and negative (Young, 1990). Thus arises the consciousness of the immigrant-colonizer and the Aboriginal-colonized, which the colonized have to accept if they are to survive. This binary consciousness justifies the separation of Indigenous peoples from their ancient rights to the land and its resources, and the transfer of wealth and productivity to the colonialists and the mother-country (Memmi, 1965).[8]

The Canadian colonialist educator represents the embodiment of the universal, the dominator has the privilege of not being considered as a member of any specific group (Memmi, 1965). Canadian educators are in a position to study others who pose a "problem," present a "question," or constitute a "case" (Memmi, 1965, p. 11). In searching for the answers for others, dominators believe they not only maintain a universal discourse, but speak the language of objectivity or impartiality.

Typically, to succeed in creating this sense of objectivity, colonizers must obscure Aboriginal memory. To strip Indigenous peoples of their heritage and identity, the colonial education and legal system induce collective amnesia that alienates Indigenous peoples from their elders, their linguistic consciousness, and their order of the world. Only the Eurocentric oppressor is the agent of progress, either by the will of God or by the law of nature. The sum of European learning is established as the universal model of civilization to be imitated by all groups and individuals. The oppressors' imperatives monopolize history or progress. In the Eurocentric construct of three-dimensional time, whoever masters the present molds the past (Memmi, 1965).

Strategy of Differences

In contrast to universalism was the strategy of differences applied to Aboriginal peoples around the world. Universal humanity may have been a key idea, but colonial educators did not apply it universally. Because colonizers consider themselves to be the ideal model for humanity and carriers of superior culture and intelligence, they believe they can judge other people and assess their competencies. In short, colonizers believe they have the power to interpret differences, and this belief shaped the institutional and imaginative assumptions of colonization and modernism. Using the strategy of differences, colonialists believe they have the privilege of defining human competencies and deviances such as sin, offense, and mental illness. They also believe they have the authority to impose their tutelage on the colonized and to remove from them the right to speak for themselves.

French philosopher Michael Foucault (1970) locates, at the outset of the colonizing period, a shift in the fundamental mode whereby knowledge is acquired:

> The activity of the mind ... will ... no longer consist in *drawing things together*, in setting out on a quest for everything that might reveal some sort of kinship, attraction or secretly shared nature within them, but, on the contrary, in *discriminating*, that is, in establishing their identities. ... In this sense, discrimination imposes upon comparison the primary and fundamental investigation of difference. (p. 55)

The strategy of difference is not simply abstract or analytical. It directly affects secular Eurocentric identity and order. Despite its pretension, colonial thought was less interested in the constitution of universal human nature than in a quest for understanding the different forms of human awareness of other people, of nature, and of themselves assumed in each kind of historical social life (Unger, 1978, p. 5). Through this strategy of difference, Eurocentric thinking created an artificial context of racism and spread it around the world.

The strategy of racism allows the colonialists to assert Eurocentric privileges while exploiting Indigenous peoples in an inhuman way (Michelson, 1968, p. 215).[9] As Memmi (1965) explains:

> Racism is the generalized and final assigning of values to real or imaginary differences, to the accuser's benefit and at his victim's expense, in order to justify the former's own privileges or aggression. (p. 185)

The strategy of stressing differences between European "civilization" and New World savages is the dominant theme of Canadian history texts.

Within Eurocentric knowledge, the colonizers asserted expansive claim to exclusive rationality and its arrogant assumption of a universal and uniform knowledge of the world which they could not live up to. Indigenous people were excluded from this "universal" definition, and, thus, became "other." These definitions are always simple, irrational, and reductive (Noel, 1994, p. 109).

The difference between self and other was an extension of the noun-based linguistic structure of Eurocentric thought. It followed the English language object-subject structure. With the rejection of the noun-God's commandments and the unitary, suprahistorical intelligible human essence of classical thought, Eurocentric thought and languages could only perceive subjective categories and make inferences (Unger, 1975). *The two methods used to do this were logical analysis and causal explanation.* Each provided an interpretation of what it means to account for something subjective; both in the sense of telling what it is like, which is description, and in the sense of establishing why it had to follow from something else, which is explanation in the strict sense.

European scholars had constructed the phenomenon of Eurocentrism on the noun-centered structure of Indo-European languages. They also fabricate it from Eurocentric historical dialectical narratives. These narratives center on the inherent superiority of the Indo-European people over all others, and on the dialectic of their self and others, who existed beyond their scope of knowledge. The fundamental problem concerns the way in which knowledge (and, therefore, theory or history) is constituted through the comprehension and incorporation of the other. Examples of how the other was constituted are in the contexts of master/servant, sovereign/subject, civilized/savage, and colonizer/colonialist and other dualism. Outside these contexts, they have not attempted to create a place for other as the other. They have tried to create some just relations with the self and the other.

European thinkers derive the dialectical structure from the structure of the Indo-European languages. This structure is revealed by the subject-verb-object way of looking at the world. It is represented in the idea of the sentence. The operation of this linguistic structure informed their world view. However, it was not until recently that Derrida argues the operation of language itself creates the necessity of both the self and the other, rather than any external reality. I will return to this insight later. We will continue the sequential quest to understand the relations between the self and other in European philosophy.

Rational Dualities

The massive hemorrhage that colonialism inflicted on Indigenous peoples is well documented. By 1914, Britain boasted of an empire 140 times its size; Belgium, 80 times; Holland, 60 times; France and Germany, 20 times. These nations were on the verge of colonizing the entire Indigenous peoples of the earth. The colonists created new hierarchies and governments that believed in the absolute superiority of Europeans over the colonized, the masculine over the feminine, the adult over the child, the historical over the ahistorical, and the modern or "progressive" over the traditional or "savage." These artificial political orders reflected ways of thinking that were defined by dialectics or polarities: the modern and the primitive, the secular and the non-secular, the scientific and the unscientific, the expert and the layman, the normal and the abnormal, the developed and the underdeveloped, the vanguard and the led, the liberated and the saveable (Nandy, 1983, p. x). In this brave new world, through a curious transposition, the colonial dominators called upon the colonized to justify themselves (Nandy, 1983, p. ix). A historical, primitive people would one day, the colonists said, learn to see themselves as masters of nature and, thus, masters of their own fate and a brave new world (Nandy, 1983). The psychological consequences of this strategy are currently unfolding.

A modern benchmark in Eurocentric thought was the extension of colonialism strategies to Europe in two world wars. These wars illustrated the problems of colonial or modern thought, which created the Enlightenment around the idea of reason. Resolving the effect of reason was the beginning of unravelling predatory thought in Eurocentrism (or its masked "Western" thought or universal ethnocentric thought) and its annihilating dialectical structure.

Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas noted that Eurocentric philosophy has been struck with the horror of the other that remains the other (Taylor, 1986, p. 346). The other was an insurmountable allergy to the Eurocentric quest for totality, the desire for unity and the universal monotheism. Through their vision of totality, Eurocentrism sacrifices the present to the future. Its premise is that the future will bring forth an ultimate, objective meaning of oneness or at least until they realize equality. Levinas thought that the logical outcome of this underlying allergy of philosophy was Hegel's philosophy (Taylor, 1986, p. 347).

Hegel (1910) lays out the linguistic operation of the dialectical structure. He articulates a philosophical structure that pivots the dialectic of the same versus the other or the master versus slaves, or the colonizer versus colonized. Similarly, Marxism deals with the oppositional dialectic of capital versus class. Foucault calls these oppositional groupings "the sovereign model of power," which is to say that power has a single source in same, master, colonizer or capital.

The duality operates by a knowledge system requiring a subject perceiving an object through the process of negation, or seeing difference. In these situations, they always center the dialectic on the self as an observer, even though it is outward looking. The self is always searching for power and control over the world. As Rousseau saw, anthropology is the clearest symptom of this way of viewing the world. Little space exists for a dialogue or conversation between the self and other.

The Eurocentric dialectic asserts the appropriation of the other as a sub-division of its knowledge. Little space is available for the other as independent of the totalization of knowledge, unless the other is "unknowable." If "unknowable," it is not knowledge. If knowable, the alternatives available are the choice of being equal as constituted by the subject categories or of being the mystical other outside the subject categories, e.g. black magic, etc. Such a construction of knowledge operates by incorporation or expropriation of the other. Dialectic thought has little tolerance with otherness; it ignores or leaves it outside its narratives, stimulates Eurocentric diffusionism, colonialism, racism, and other strategies of difference.

Since World War I, the narrative of twentieth-century thought is a continuous attempt to get out of the dualism or binary categories. In Eurocentric thought, no alternative to the dialectic has been found. The dialectic appears to be intrinsic to the noun structure of the European languages. Also, Eurocentric thought has an immunity system. One cannot get out of it by negation or contradiction, because the dialectic already includes negation and opposition as the working of resistance. One cannot get away from the dialectic by ignoring it, excluding or extirpating its processes as Eurocentric thought has revealed.

After the horror of World War II, both German and French scholars re-examined the Enlightenment traditions for similar reasons. Fascism seemed to have stopped in its tracks the long march of the progress of reason. It ended the liberating enlightenment ideas (of which many Eurocentric scholars thought Marxism was the fullest political development). In Germany, Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1944) created the Frankfurt School of critical thinkers. They attempted to explain how reason had developed into fascism, human genocide, and violation of human rights. Their answer was that Enlightenment's dialectic of reason has always contained a measure of irrationality; the negative part of reason had led to tyranny and domination. The very powers of rationality that enabled the Europeans to free themselves from nature and control has also become an instrumental device to dominate them. Europeans had rationalized Nature into productive commodities. They had rationalized their own humanity into an empty and passive consumer. The task for critical scholars was to excise the irrationality that had produced this domination. They had to redefine reasons and the forms of identity thinking that had defined existence as an indistinguishable element of the collective. In this way, through emphasizing the autonomy and spontaneity of the individual, they might retrieve the original goal of enlightenment. This created the Frankfort School that Habermas led.

For French thinkers, they had to deal with the colonial and imperial legacy. Colonialism and Eurocentric diffusionism were not rational premises of society. Ce'saire, Fanon and Foucault saw fascism as simply European colonialism brought home to Europe. After the first world war, as a country deprived of an overseas empire, Germany sought to colonize the colonizer and acquire world empire. The French thinkers did not try to purge the irrationality out of rational thought, instead they analyzed reason itself. They saw irrationality as simply reason's negative other, an excluded but necessary dialectic. Despotic enlightenment was based on reason. The relationship of the enlightenment, its grand projects, and universal truth-claims were all related to European colonialism. This involved both an understanding of the relentless critique of the collusive forms of European knowledge that created colonization, and a direct analysis of its effects. For Foucault, this comprised a vigorous critique of historicism and its relation to the operations of knowledge and power (or historicist forms of knowledge).

The French thinkers focused on ways to undo reason's own tendency to domination, dogmatism and despotism. Specifically, they challenged rationality's claims to universality. Reason had to be liberated from itself, they could not recognize it as universal or totalizing. It is from this perspective that it becomes possible to understand the basis of the distrust of totalizing systems of knowledge that depends upon theory and ideas. Foucault and Lyotard (1970) sought to isolate the singularity or contingent event in reason as opposed to universality. The search for the singularity that refused all conceptualization constructed a new form of knowledge that respects the other without trying to absorb or assimilate it into the same. This created the post-structuralists and post-modernists.

In the post war era, European scholars began deconstructing the sovereign, civilized reasoning of Eurocentric thought. The deconstruction of Eurocentric (Occidental or Western) knowledge, or self, illustrates the extent to which Europe's other has been a narcissistic self-image through which it has artificially constructed itself. Deconstructionism involves the decentralization and decolonization of European thought or *episteme*.

Levinas (1961), in *Totality and Infinity,* is illustrative of these thinkers. He wrote his book under the terror of two world wars in Europe, but dialectical thought continues to be his methodology. He defined politics as the art of foreseeing war and of winning it. War is another form of the appropriation of the others, and underpins all ontological thinking with its violence. The violence involved in politics is more than just physical force, injuring or annihilating persons. It is also "ontological imperialism," a process that results in

> interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves, making them betray not only commitments but their own substance ...(Taylor, 1986, p. 21).

Such destructive activities, to Levinas (1961), should not be immune for ethical or moral consideration, since war is the philosophical concept of being (ontology) itself. He argued that politics should not be placed before morality. Since being is always defined as appropriation of others as identities. Once defined as identities, they are appropriated into larger orders or categories (knowledge, history, or state).

His objection to Eurocentric totalization and of ontology is its inherent violent and negative reaction towards the other. Eurocentric knowledge always views the other as a threat. The only issue is the degree of the threat Eurocentric knowledge projects onto the other. Its only response to the other is to appropriate and sublate the essence of the other into itself. Eurocentric theory and the understanding of the spectator are unable to let the other remain outside itself, a singularity or separation outside its vision of totality. Such ontological imperialism forces the alterity of the other to vanish into sameness. It forces the other to be neutralized as a means of integration. This response will be true of any idea that is different. Eurocentric knowledge must appropriate the other in an act of violence and reduction. This desire to comprehension and representation cannot do justice to the different.

In this situation, Eurocentric ontology amounts to a universal egotism of European thinkers in which the relations with the other are accomplished through its assimilation into the self. Rather than being about existence, a philosophy of existence becomes a philosophy of power and control. It is not a valid theory of knowledge.

Perhaps the historian best illustrates the processes of totalization. A historiographer assimilates all particular existences and events into the structure of universal history, a chronological order or grand narrative. This narrative becomes analogous to nature itself (Taylor, 1986, p. 55). Such history silently incorporates others within its dominant order, often masking cruelty and injustice within its recording of righteous victory. It is another manifestation of the need to appropriate the other into the familiar. It ignores the alterity of the other, and the alterity of their interpretation of time and events or their absolute past.

Also, the Eurocentric quest of imperialism of sameness justifies the Eurocentric self in extending itself to anything that threatens its identity with the potential to assimilate it. This justification is the source of colonization and wars. It is a theory of freedom that is not based on justice, which respects the alterity of the other, and leads to understanding through the asymmetry of dialogue.

Levinas (1961) proposed that instead of violence toward the other, European thought should learn to respect the other and accept an infinite separation of the other from sameness. The idea of infinity is the antidote to totality. It marks a relationship with a surplus always exterior to the totality (Taylor, 1986, p. 22). Yet, how can Eurocentric knowledge know, respect, and understand the other?

Derrida's *Of Grammatology* focuses on a critique of ethnocentrism, of "logocentrisms," the dialectics of the centre and the margin, which is another version of Eurocentrism. The dialectic operates geographically and conceptually. It articulates the power relations between Europe and the colonies. It deconstructs the idea, the authority, and the assumed superiority of Eurocentric thought. This is often referred to as post-modern thought.

Post-modern thought can best be defined as European scholars' awareness that Europe is no longer the unquestioned and dominant centre of the world. It involves a more active critique of the premises of Eurocentric knowledge, by using its own alterity in relation to other forms of knowledge. However, post-modern thought is another attempt by European scholars to regain intellectual control.

The crisis of our times has created post-colonial Indigenous thinkers and societies who struggle to free themselves from the Eurocentric colonial context. Most of these scholars are gifted immigrant scholars from the colonized countries that teach university in England or the United States; for example, Said, Bhabba, and Spivak. While they still have to use the techniques of Eurocentric thought, they have had the courage to rise above them and create new intellectual traditions. They have built on the traditions of Gandhi, who has shown British society that its self-legitimating and self-congratulatory colonial race-relations discourses were inconsistent with any concept of a rule of law. Additionally, they build on the works of Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi, who have shown that the race-relations theories were grounded in and sustained by themes derived from European racism and imperialism.

Aboriginal Restoration

In Canadian universities and colleges, Eurocentric contexts inform the academic curricula. Most of the contexts reject the idea of intelligible spirits as essences of an ecology. They reject that all life in nature has an intelligible spirit. They reject that life can be animated by these spirits or life forces. They reject that the human mind can understand an ecology through these life forces or the language that conforms to this vision. Instead, Eurocentric educators believe there are numberless ways in which they can classify ideas, objects, and events in an ecology. The only standard to justify these

Eurocentric classification or consequential categories is by determining the particular human desire or purpose that created the classification. The only validity of the Eurocentric classification system is its power to advance the ends of people who fabricated the system. The validity rests on their ability to contribute to particular and instrumental ends, such as measurement, or prediction, or control of events. No basis exists for saying that one classification system or language portrays the "real" world more accurately than another.

When most professors describe the "world," they describe artificial Eurocentric contexts and ignore Aboriginal world views, knowledge, and thought. For most Aboriginal students, the realization of their invisibility is similar to looking into a still lake and not seeing their image. They become alien in their own eyes, unable to recognize themselves in the reflections and shadows of the world. As the dignity and wealth of their grandparents and parents was stripped, today's Aboriginal students are being stripped of their heritage and identity. Annihilation of hope, progress and cultural continuity is the result, though conscious resistance to alienation can develop.

Often when Aboriginal students become aware of the colonizers' vision of them and reject it, they experience what W.E.B. DuBois (1969) called "double consciousness:"

> This sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (p. 45).

Double consciousness occurs when the colonized assert they are uniquely human, but the dominators reject this assertion and impose their standards as universal and normal (Noel, 1994, p. 149).

At best, Canadian universities and educational systems teach this double consciousness to Aboriginal students. These educational systems define Aboriginal heritage, identity, and thought as inferior to the Aboriginals' adopted Eurocentric heritage, identity, and thought. However, such a conclusion is not validated by their own theory of knowledge. They cannot evaluate Aboriginal world views by Eurocentric purposes or desires, even if they believe them universal. No foundation exists for saying that Aboriginal world views, heritage, or languages are inferior ways of knowing to any other world view. World views can only be evaluated on their ability to meet the Aboriginal beliefs.

To attempt to evaluate Aboriginal world views by Eurocentric analysis is irrational. One cannot make rational choices among conflicting world views, especially those held by the others. No world view describes an ecology or society more accurately than others. All world views describe some parts of the ecology or society completely, though in its own way. No world view has the power to completely describe the entire universe. The purposive theories that sustain Eurocentric thought do not allow for an independent comparison of competing, or even potentially complementary, world views. Unless Eurocentric thought is willing to qualify the principle that classifications and categories are constructed by human minds for human purposes, it cannot sustain any confidence in the possibility of comparing Aboriginal world views and languages with Eurocentric world views and languages. Comparison of world view relies on the idea that there is a realm of things and events in nature, independent of the human mind, that is capable at some point of being perceived as it truly is. However, this idea is itself grounded on the doctrine of intelligible spirits or essences, which is rejected by Eurocentric thoughts for human purposes. Rejection of the sacred or immanence of spirit(s) can be construed as a "blind spot" of contextual incoherence or irrationality of Eurocentric thought.

When Eurocentric thought is faced with a choice between two different paradigms or theoretical views of the structure of nature – for example, Newtonian and quantum theory – only the ability to measure, predict or control mediates the paradigms. This solution does not resolve the dilemma. Eurocentric scientists must still interpret the results of every experiment they perform and justify the methods of proof they have chosen. Since such purposes are arbitrary in conception, there are limited ways to prove better results.

Typically, however, Eurocentric thought explicitly and implicitly confirms Aboriginal inadequacy and asserts a negative image of Aboriginal heritage and identity. Tragically, there is already a long history, in Canada, of students who have succumbed and inwardly endorse Eurocentric thought and help lay the foundations of the relationship of domination that entrenches their thoughts (Noel, 1994). However, new Aboriginal scholars have been asserting the validity of Aboriginal world view and knowledge and questioning Eurocentric biases.

Some of the best Aboriginal world view restoration in educational systems can be found in the writing of the Mi'kmaq educator, Marie Battiste (1986), especially in her critique of cognitive imperialism. Other important Aboriginal thinkers and their writing are Blackfoot scholar, Leroy Littlebear; Maori educators Linda and Graham Smith; Mohawk teacher Patricia Monture (OKanee) Angus; Yupiak scientist Oscar Kawagley; Chickasaw writer, Linda Hogan; and Tewa educator, Gregory Cajete.

Moreover, Aboriginal educators can find strength in the awareness of common cycles and patterns of Eurocentric thought itself. The needed transformation in context is a common pattern in European legal thought. Indeed, it is a persistent cycle in all their cognitive reality. In the history of European consciousness, mastery in thought or world views is the mark of periods in which a novel set of ideas has been introduced by scholars at a loss to solve particular problems in different fields of knowledge. Eventually, they discover these problems are connected with one another. Then, they find the sources of their bafflement in the premises that underlie the disciplines or contexts within whose boundaries they have been working. At last, they establish new contexts that sweep away the difficulties they faced. Correspondingly, after mastery of a particular problem, there is a movement from ideological mastery to enslavement. As Hegel (1910) showed with great brilliance, the history of European thought and culture is an ever-changing pattern of great liberating ideas that inevitably turn into suffocating straight-jackets.

These paradoxes operate in Canadian versions of Eurocentric thought. Canada is a land of diversity, embracing vast differences within its borders and among its people. The Aboriginal and the Eurocentric educators need to create an integral knowledge in all educational systems. Only such a knowledge system can meet the needs of all Canadians. They must accept transcultural dialogues and talking circles rather than validating Eurocentric knowledge. We must recognize cross-culturality as the potential termination point of Eurocentric thought. Canadian legal thinkers must understand that cross-cultural, syncretic thought can create a legitimate place where each knowledge system is recognized. Such thoughts and places can help the colonized Aboriginal people to recover an effective identifying relation with a damaged ecology. This vision provides a framework of "difference on equal terms" within which transcultural knowledge may be cooperatively and respectfully worked out in the future.

End Notes

[1] A paradigm, for my purposes, is a set of implicit assumptions, concepts, theories, and postulates held in common by several members of a community that enables them to explore jointly a well-defined and delimited area of inquiry and to communicate in a specialized language about the subject. These paradigms define the boundaries of acceptable inquiry and the limiting assumptions within a discipline.

[2] Unger explained the contextual or conditional quality of all human activity: "To say that extended conceptual activity is conditional is to say that its practice depends on

taking for granted, at least provisionally, many beliefs that define its nature and limits. These assumptions include criteria of validity, verification, or sense; a view of explanation, persuasion, or communication, and even an underlying ontology - a picture of what the world is really like. It may even include a set of premises about whether and in what sense thought and language have a structure."

[3] See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner's, 1958) p. 30.

[4] Citing Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*. (New York: Crowell, 1968); Julian Haynes Steward, *Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955).

[5] See R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1934). Cultural relativists sought to demonstrate that standards of morality and normalcy are culture-bound and called into question the ethnocentric assumption of European superiority. Alison Dudes Rentelin, *International Human Rights: Universalism versus Relativism* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990) at 66.

[6] Relativists claim that such universality is a cloak for the projection of culturally specific beliefs onto other cultures that possess different world views or "inner logic." A. D. Rentelin, p.p. 67-72.

[7] There are many examples of the search for the millennium. For example, in the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament, when the Lord asked whom He should send on the spiritual journey, Isaiah replied, "Here I am: send me," Isaiah 6. In the New Testament, the disciples of Christ are told to go forth to baptize all nations and to teach the things that have been commanded to them, Matthew 28:19; Christ said to Peter "feed my sheep," John 21:17.

[8] "When all is said and done, the colonizer must be recognized by the colonized. The bond between the colonizer and the colonized is thus both destructive and creative. It destroys and recreates the two partners in the colonization process as colonizer and colonized: the former is disfigured into an oppressor, an uncouth, fragmented human being, a cheat solely preoccupied with his privileges, the latter into a victim of oppression, broken in his ..." (A Memmi, 1965).

[9] "Everyone has felt the contempt implicit in the term 'native,' used to designate the inhabitants of a colonized country. The banker, the manufacturer, even the professor in the home country, are not natives of any country: they are not native at all. The oppressed person, on the other hand, feels himself to be a native; each single event in his life repeats to him that he has not the right to exist." Jean-Paul Sartre, "Materialism and Revolution," in Literary and Philosophical Essays, trans A. Michelson (London: Hutchinson, 1968) at 215.

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Weaving a World of Respect

Robin June Hood

IXCHEL is the Mayan Goddess of the changing moon, weaving, prophesy, sexuality, healing and childbirth. She sits easily with great presence, for she is in the bliss of creativity, weaving the fabric of life itself. Each of us is a thread in her great pattern. Having chosen carefully, she takes a deep breath of eternity, exhales the life force into each being and begins to weave. And so your life and all lives begin ...

(Hall Iglehart, 1990)

Introduction

In 1996 to 1997, my daughter and I lived at Totonicapan in the Guatemalan highlands. We worked with a group of Mayan educators who are developing educational programs for working children. Totonicapan is one of the areas of Guatemala where ancient Mayan teachings have been maintained by Mayan priests, or daykeepers, to the present day. The daykeepers are initiated calendar diviners, dream interpreters, and readers of lightning in the blood, an ancient curing system. They are also the link between the people, the ancestors and the creator and, today, these elders are playing a central role in the creation of contemporary Mayan education programs that are being developed in numerous communities throughout Guatemala.

To the K'iche' Maya (The K'iche' are the largest group of the 22 Mayan peoples in Guatemala numbering about 1.5 million people) heaven and earth are still the texts to live by and prayers to the Creator address the *heart of the sky*, and *the heart of the earth*. To utter a word is to create the world for, to the K'iche', all words have a sacred resonance, a code of meaning that connects each person with the heart of the sky and the heart of the earth. All acts of life are sacred acts, to be performed according to the round of the calendars and one's nagual, or position, in the sky wheel.

Mayan traditional knowledge and teachings are an intricate part of everyday life of the K'iche' Maya, and cannot be separated from the rest of community life as they are firmly imbedded in it. The following traditions about time, and weaving, relate largely to K'iche' Maya traditions from the area of Totonicapan. My intent in this paper is to illuminate some of the layers, or fractals, of these living teachings, and to provide a small "ilbal" or seeing instrument into some of the issues facing contemporary Mayan educators as they weave their living curriculum.

Maltiox to all my Mayan teachers especially to Wensesloa Almira, and Agustin Sapon Morales, educators, friends and daykeepers.

Historical Background

The contemporary Maya live in a region that stretches from Chiapas in southern Mexico, encompassing all of Guatemala and parts of Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. About 60 to 70 percent of Guatemala's 11 million people are Maya, speaking 22 different languages. Since the country gained independence in 1821, the Maya people have suffered from poverty and discrimination at the hands of the dominant Ladino minority, who own approximately 90% of the land and control the country's powerful military and the economy. Illiteracy and poverty continue to plague most Maya communities. Life expectancy amongst the Guatemalan Maya today is 10 years lower than among Ladinos, and infant mortality of Mayan children is the highest on the continent. Land reform is considered the key issue among thousands of landless Mayan people. In the current Guatemalan government, of eighty congress members only six members are Mayan.

Peace Accords

On December 29, 1996, a peace accord was signed by the Guatemalan government and the URNG, the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity, ending a 36 year war that has been described by historians as one of the worst cases of genocide of modern times. During the country's civil war, Mayas bore the brunt of the bloodshed. Mayan communities became military targets during the "scorched-earth" counter-insurgency campaign in the early 1980s, as the army considered the Maya to be guerrilla allies, and thus targeted their highland communities for repression.

Testimonial stories and eye-witness accounts document human rights abuses against men, women and children unparalleled in this century. Between 1978 and 1985, four hundred and forty-four Mayan villages were destroyed in military operations in the Guatemalan highlands. Between 60,000 and 200,000 people were killed, and over 40,000 "disappeared." Another 500,000 became internal refugees, 150,000 fled to Mexico, and more than 200,000 Mayans sought refugee status in other countries.

The Peace Accords established a Truth Commission, but their mandate didn't include identifying violators or persecuting war criminals. Consequently, a grass-roots campaign led by the Catholic Church, called *the Recovery of the Historical Memory Project* (REMHI), was created in April 1995. The goal of this project was to collect the testimonies of the civilian population who suffered most from the armed conflict. The majority of the victims of the war were poor Mayan farmers who lived in the highlands. The REMHI project collected 5,465 testimonies that were compiled into a four-volume document called *Guatemala, Nunca Mas (Never Again)*, which documented 644 massacres, many exterminating entire Mayan communities. During this time, many Mayas also concealed their languages and stopped wearing their traje (traditional dress) for fear of being identified as guerrilla supporters. Monsignor Juan Gerardi, the director of the REMHI project, presented the report to the people on April 22, 1998. Four days later, he was brutally assassinated.

Currently, there are over 400 Mayan non-governmental agencies that are working to ensure that Mayan voices are part of the peace process in Guatemala. They have formed an umbrella group called COPMAGUA – the Coordinator of the Mayan Peoples - to negotiate the content of the implementation of the Indigenous Accord signed with the government as part of the peace accords. The Indigenous Accord is considered, by many, to be the most difficult part of the peace treaty to enforce.

The Indigenous Accord specifies the establishment of three Commissions for negotiations with the government. These concern educational reform, Indigenous participation, and land-related rights. In addition, there are two commissions to address spirituality and sacred sites, and the officialization of Indigenous languages. COPMAGUA has advocated the need for three additional Commissions – on constitutional reform, Indigenous women's rights, and one on traditional Indigenous law. COPMAGUA representatives such as Wencesloa Almira, the Executive Director of UPMAG, the Union of Mayan Peoples, have stated that the Indigenous Accord is not their goal, but just a beginning of ensuring Indigenous participation in Guatemala's future.

However, on May 18th, 1998, *The Globe and Mail* reported that, "the ballot that would have given Indian groups official recognition was defeated. Indian leaders cited poverty, weak political organization, and division left by the war as reasons for the defeat." Only 18% of registered voters cast ballots, and the *Globe and Mail* went on to document that "the vote heightened tensions between the country's Indigenous majority and those who feared reforms would give Indians special privileges."

Maintaining Sacred Balance - Mayan Concepts of Time

Despite Guatemala's continued denial of the rights of the majority of its population, Mayan educators continue their project of creating Mayan schools following Mayan curricula. Two important elements at the core of the new programs are the teachings about time and about weaving.

The K'iche' people maintain the Mayan calendrical system, which was one of the most advanced in the world at the time of the Spanish conquest of Latin America. The Maya recorded the lunar and solar systems, calculated eclipses, as well as the orbits of Venus, Mars and Jupiter. The daykeepers are considered shaman-priests, and are considered the traditional peoples' link to the Creator. They are responsible for maintaining the balance between the divine and daily life, through an intricate system of interpreting time. The sacred 260-day calendar provides the base of the elaborate divination system that daykeepers use to interpret each day's sacred meaning and its correspondence to daily life. Not only do the days have proper names and characters that are divine, but so do the numbers. The combination of days and numbers is significant as well as the context. A "good" day in one context may be a "bad" day in another. Children are taught not only the meaning of each day, but about their own sacred days of conception, birth, and protection as a foundation for endogenous education, where they must find their face, find their heart, and find their foundation.

K'iche' time also has functions that are connected to it related to curing, economics, health, family, and community life. The ancestors, the gods and the living people are all linked up through their time system, creating an environment that infuses their whole existence. Edward Hall (1983) described it as follows:

> The Quiche reality causes them to scrutinize each day and its character as it relates to their own character, their desires, and their past, as well as the tasks that lie ahead. The Quiche really do have to think deeply and seriously about the process of how each day is to be lived. For the Quiche, living a life is somewhat analogous to composing music, painting, or writing a poem. Each day, properly approached, can either be a work of art or a disaster if the proper combinations are not found. It is the Quiche way to consciously evaluate everything from the outside world. If the item is judged to be beneficial, it is then adapted to local custom, otherwise it is rejected. As a result, nothing is ever felt to be strange or alien. In that way, the foundations of life are not threatened. In this respect, the Quiche are quite remarkable. They are well defended against Europeans and their culture. Their approach to time may be a clue to how this immunity to cultural disintegration works (p. 87).

The K'iche' treat time as dialectic, meaning that at no given time – past, present, or future – is it possible to isolate that time from the events that led up to it and which flow from it. K'iche' time and the daykeeping divination system demonstrate that, amongst the K'iche,' time is a sacred system, one's obligation to one's ancestors reaches back and forward into time, a person is intimately related to the earth, its nature spirits and the gods, and one has sacred relationships with, and obligations to, the larger community. This concept of time binds people to their ancestors, to God, to the community and to daily life. In addition, the ability to divine using the movement of blood is felt to be a gift from the ancestors.

The Calendars

The Cholq'ij, the Sacred Calendar or literally the days of the count, or the count of kin (the sun), is composed of thirteen numbers and twenty symbols (days). The days of the sacred lunar calendar (called the Tzolkin and named by Thompson in the early 1900s) are like the Western week with twenty days in place of seven; they are also named after the gods. Along with the bar and dot notation used for numbers, the numbers below twenty are also written in hieroglyphs, stylized human faces that depict each number's disposition. The K'iche' also keep a solar calendar of 365 days containing 18 months of 20 days with 5 remaining days. The two cycles, one lasting 260 days and the other 365 days, mesh together to form the Calendar Round. On the combined calendar, the first day of the month on the solar calendar is called the *Mam* and is referred to as the *Year-bearer*. In the Guatemala highlands, Barbara Tedlock (1992) found 34 Ixil, Mam, and Pokomchi towns still keep the 365-day cycle and the 260-day cycle linked by a system of Year-bearers. The grade three curriculum of the K'iche' people explains the Tzolkin as follows:

> We have a calendar that is sacred, because it shows the destiny of mankind. It has 260 days, divided into 13 months of twenty days each. The days are divided into good and bad days. Each day had a Dueno (lord). The calendar has an influence in the life of everyone everyday; there are good days for marriage, for selling, for curing diseases and for travelling. The calendar is also linked up with agriculture; there are special days to pick the seeds, to prepare the earth, to plant, to thin and to harvest, and all this is lined up with the phases of the moon (translated from the K'iche', *Ri Reta'Maxik Ri Utz Taq No'Jib" Al Pa Ri Amaq' Re Siwan Tinimit Urox Junab*, 1992, p. 46).

During a 52 year cycle, a Baktun, every day has a unique name and meaning interpreted by the diviners. The Tzolkin is divided further into four patterns or seasons of 65 kin (day) each. The seasons also correspond to the four directions and to the

Mayan Directional Guardians. The calendar system is then composed of kin (a Day), Uinal (20 kin), Tzolkin (290 days or 13 Uinals of 20 kin), a Tun (360 days - 20 kin Uinals), a Katun (20 Tuns - 7,200 days), a Baktun (20 Katuns), and the Creation Epoch, which equals 13 Baktuns. At this time, the K'iche' are living in the last 20-year period, a Katun of the Maya's Fifth Creation Epoch. This Katun completes on December 21, 2012 ending three cycles of the Mayan calendar, the current Katun, the current Baktun, and the current Creation Epoch.

The twenty K'iche' day names are divine as well as proper names. Although the names have been translated into Spanish and English, the names such as *Batz* (monkey) and *Ix* (jaguar), are taken by daykeepers to be proper names within a context of calendrical divination. A given day is interpreted by means of phrases that map the meanings of the day in terms of the social actions that characterize them. Names are read not as words, but as oral reference for other words using poetic sound play.

The days have multiple interpretations including the "face of the day" and the "character" of the child born that day. There are elaborate ceremonies involved after the conception and birth of a child, which links up with its day and the mountain altar connected to it. The mnemonic phrases for each day, the ceremonies performed on the day, its "face" and "character," and some of the possible meanings of the day in different contexts, are all taught by daykeepers and are now being taught to Mayan children in many of the Mayan schools.

> The Quiche people speak a Mayan language, say prayers to Mayan mountains and Mayan ancestors, and keep time according to the Mayan calendar. They are also interested citizens of the larger contemporary world, but they find themselves surrounded and attacked by those who have yet to realize they have something to teach the rest of us. For them, it is not that the time of the Mayan civilization has passed, to be followed by the time of the European civilization, but that the two have begun to run alongside one another. A complete return to conditions existing before Europeans is unthinkable, as is a complete abandonment of Indigenous traditions in favour of European ones. What most worries daykeepers about people from Europe, and specifically about missionaries, is that they confuse the earth, whose divinity is equal to that of the celestial God, with the devil. As daykeepers put it, "He who makes an enemy of the Earth makes an enemy of his own body."

The *Popol Vul*

The *Popol Vul* is the K'iche' Maya book of creation and it is considered to be one of the most extraordinary texts of Indigenous America. Originally written in hieroglyphs, it was transcribed using the Spanish alphabet in the sixteenth century. It tells the story of the creation and follows the deeds of the Maya Gods who founded the

Quiche kingdom in the Guatemalan highlands. In the preface to his translated version of the *Popol Vul*, Dennis Tedlock (1985) writes that the authors who wrote the *Popol Vul* using the Spanish alphabet did so "in a time of much turmoil and difficulty;" the authors were writing "amid the preaching of God, in Christendom now," and what they wrote they described as "the ancient word" or "prior word." Tedlock adds that their writings have a plaintive tone although, at the same time, they state that their own gods "accounted for everything – and did it, too – from enlightened being, in enlightened words" (p. 33).

The original hieroglyphic *Popol Vul* is described as a council book, containing accounts of cycles of astronomical and earthly events that served as a guide for those who wished to see and move beyond the present. Tedlock (1985) believes that the ancient reader of the *Popol Vul* would use the book to give a reading or, on occasion, "a long performance and account" whose subject was the emergence of the whole *cahuleu* or "earth-sky," the K'iche' way of saying "world." The council book is a long complex story, which contains much traditional knowledge. It tells of the gods' attempts to create beings who will walk, talk, work, and pray in an articulate manner. They make attempts to create human beings first from mud and then wood and only succeed when they use corn dough. The first people to be made from the corn dough are named Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Mahucutah, and True Jaguar. They become the first four heads of the K'iche' patrilineages and are called the "mother-fathers" who serve as the ritual symbolic and androgynous parents to everyone in their respective lineages.

The *Popol Vul* reveals much about the cosmology of present day K'iche' Maya thought and is the central sacred book now used in many of the Mayan schools. Mayan people today still consider dualities as complementary rather than opposed, interpenetrating rather than mutually exclusive. And instead of being in opposition to each other, the realms of divine and human actions are joined by mutual attraction.

To give you a sense of the *Popol Vul*, here is a brief excerpt from it ...

> We shall bring to light now because the *Popol Vul* ... cannot be seen anymore, in which was clearly seen coming from the other side of the sea ... The original book, written long ago, existed but its sight is hidden from the searcher and from the thinker.
>
> Great were the descriptions and the account of how all the earth was formed, how it was formed and divided into four parts; how it was partitioned and how the sky was divided; and the measuring cord was brought, and it was stretched over the sky and over the earth, on the four angles, on the four corners, as was told by the Creator and the maker, the Mother and the Father of Life; of

> all created things, he who gives breath and thought, she who gives birth to children, he who watches over the happiness of the people, the happiness of the human race, the wise man, he who meditates on the goodness of all that exists in the sky, on the earth, in the lakes and in the sea.

A Woven World - Arts of Respect

The Mayan people of highland Guatemala and Chiapas follow a daily life where the sacred and the profane intertwine. All aspects of life are part of a tradition that the Maya say God gave them at the beginning of the world. In many highland villages, women still weave much of the families' clothing. The *huipils*, the large rectangular blouses women wear, bear elaborate geometric designs that describe the Mayan cosmos.

Chip Morris (1987) has lived and worked with weavers in Chiapas for decades. He became fascinated with the ancient language of symbols woven into Mayan costumes, and has spent most of his life working with them. He writes that they describe:

> Weavers capture the moment when the world is renewed ... Ceremonial garments are woven with designs that for millennia, have depicted the Maya cosmos and the supernatural beings that make the world flower. Living Maya culture has preserved much of the ancient traditions at the deepest layer of belief. Influences from the Aztecs, the Spanish, and modern technocrats have been absorbed into a profound and complex culture ... Every act, even one as humble as sweeping, is given dignity and importance in the world described through myths. Today's daily chores – making tortillas, cutting wood, weaving – are the same chores performed by the heroes and gods at the beginning of time, acts that began the world and that keep it alive (pp. 11-35).

According to Agustin Sapon Morales, a weaver and Director of Pop Atziak, a Mayan Cultural Centre:

> At the beginning of the world, our ancestors created the art of weaving because clothes were needed for the two grandchildren ... The children needed clothes because the weather was so harsh. The grandmother was interested in solving the problem. One day, while she was up in the mountains thinking about how to resolve her grandchildren's needs, she happened to see a spider moving its thread from side to side in the bushes. And as she watched, the spider started to weave.

Today's huipils resemble the classic Mayan designs worn over twelve hundred years ago. A huipil encloses a woman in her sacred space. The opening of a woman's huipil is usually encircled with a sacred design such as flowers or diamonds. When a woman weaves, she continues a tapestry created by her ancestors. Agustin Morales explains:

> Weaving is something very important in culture, because our ancestors put their memories into their weaving. They expressed all of their experiences and feelings in weaving. Everything in the weaving has a symbolic meaning. In fact, that is what the name of our organization, Pop Atziak, means, "The History of Weaving" – the history of the Mayan people which is represented in the weaving (Personal communication, Totonicapan).

The huipil is believed to be a mirror of the universe and a portal to the Earth lord's cave. Morris (1987) explains this in more detail:

> The design of the universe is woven, with clarity and purpose, line by line, into Maya cloth. The weaver maps the motion of the sun through the heavens and the underworld, through time and space. A Mayan woman weaves the universe as it awakens. When a Mayan woman puts on her huipil, she emerges through the neck hole symbolically in the axis of the world. The designs of the universe radiate from her head, extending over the sleeves and bodice of the huipil to form an open cross with the woman in the middle. Here the supernatural and the natural meet. Here, in the very centre of a world woven from dreams and myths, she stands between heaven and the underworld (p. 108).

Some weavers are reluctant to talk about the meaning of woven motifs as well as other sacred teachings and are generally more concerned with creating their weaving than with describing it, but others, like Agustin Sapon Morales, are committed to bringing these teachings to the public, especially to the children. He explains that there are rules for the placement of motifs in a huipil, but they are flexible rules. A weaver will never make the exact design twice; there is always a small change, so that each piece is unique. The motif of a field of diamond-shaped designs is sacred – an ancient Mayan concept of space and time. Agustin Sapon Morales explains the significance of colour.

> Blue signifies space. It also symbolizes the presence of the creator, heart of the sky. The creator is both the heart of the sky and the heart of the earth. Green stands for mother earth. Everything is part of mother earth. It also symbolizes the essence of Mayan spirituality. And then there are the symbols, zigzags, lightning flashes, stars, nets and animals of all sorts in a riot, monkeys, scorpions, jaguars, bats, turkeys, hummingbirds. There are differences in the meaning of a piece of fabric depending upon the weaver's family and the community in which she lives; the composition of the piece, its colours and symbols can be read like a book (Personal communication).

In Guatemala, the most intricate ceremonial costumes are those worn by married women, but young girls still weave the brightest colours. Until quite recently, in many villages, a man would not marry a woman who could not weave. Most weaving is still done for the immediate family, but more and more women produce textiles for sale.

Textiles are also sold from one community to another; for example, the men of Momostenango make most of the woolen blankets for all of Guatemala. Weaving is considered both art and work, a form of teaching and of learning. Little girls may begin to learn some basic techniques as early as four or five, but are not expected to produce a usable piece of clothing until they are seven or eight.

Weaving - Arts of Resistance

For the Maya, the best way to resist the colonial order, which imposed its own views, was to preserve and transmit the experience of one's own culture, language and identity. Meanings embodied in today's weavings are still social, bodily and magical. These weavings are textiles of resistance, a society's fortress of the soul maintained throughout the centuries; an encoded identity worn like an armour of cotton. Margarita de Orellana considers Mayan weaving as another history of consciousness, where the textiles become the warp in the mindset of a time. De Orellana outlines four paths in understanding our relationship to these textiles. The first involves the immediacy of their beauty, a beauty that is in stark contrast to the grim reality of current Mayan life. On a second path, the textiles are viewed as a social sign, an index of one's position within the community as depicted by each garment, an outer emblem of one's community worn in front of others as an individual and collective identity. A third path involves the forest of symbols, where the encoded meaning of a community emerges like a universal tree of life, both grounded and aerial. Agustin Sapon Morales explains some of this symbolism:

> The bird is a figure which is never absent from our weavings. The bird symbolizes earth, the presence of mother earth, a bird can fly, it can go wherever it wants. No limits or borders. This is the feathered serpent. According to the beliefs of our ancestors, the feathered serpent represents the great sovereign, the invisible god. What our ancestors want to tell us about this figure is that it twists and turns, it represents the course of our life as a person. Our life is always like this. A reptile winds it way through the patterns like a serpent between the earth and sky. Two-headed birds are symbols of the Maya concept of dark and light, good and bad (Personal communication).

In the fourth path, textiles are seen as part of a wider imaginary warp, which includes the play of images that weavers have of themselves and of their tradition. It is a dialogue between the collective imaginations that form the texture of a present world view or mindset. Agustin Sapon Morales explains:

> Cot is a two-headed eagle. It's an image referring to Mayan spirituality. When Maya priests receive the bara, the staff which symbolizes the priests' responsibilities, they are able to make predictions. They can tell what

> problems there are likely to be. But always with reference to what has happened in the past. That's why the eagle has two heads. It sees into the future as well as the past. What this reminds us of is that we have both a future and a past. It also means fertilization, birth and destiny. These three symbols mean a lot to people. And that's why they are always in Mayan weaving. Our ancestors always said what has happened in the past in each person's life must not be forgotten. But we must think too, about the present and the future (Personal communication).

Andres Fabregas Puig writes,

> The play of symbols embodied a knowledge - as in the codices, for example - which revealed collective talent, while consolidating a resistance culture that chose the route of art to safeguard the heritage of its ancestors, to save it from the hands of the colonizer and place it daily in the hands of present and future generations. The practice is so deep rooted that, today, textiles from Chiapas serve as a guide to understanding how that culture views the cosmos and how it preserves itself, transforming on its own terms and maintaining its identity. History and culture are intertwined on these textiles. They confirm the diverse paths open to society and bear witness to the force of identities that were formerly denied (translated from the Spanish, in *Artes de Mexico* (1996): *Weaving a fortress: textiles from Chiapas: the epitome of a resistance culture*).

A generation or two ago, all clothing worn in highland Guatemala and Chiapas was handspun and woven. Now, most men buy and wear western-style clothing, and it is not uncommon for women to wear factory made sweaters over their huipils. The discarding of traditional dress by the men is thought to have been one way of avoiding the rampant racism in Guatemala, and may have also been one way to avoid identification of one's community by the army, since each community can be identified by its *traje*. The French photojournalist, Jean-Marie Simon, has photographed army briefing sessions on identifying highland trajes which have been published in her book, *Guatemala, Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny*. Evangelic missionaries have condemned the "pagan" motifs and insisted that weavers alter these designs, foreign designers have taught weavers how to use different colours and have influenced the use of motifs as well as the designs to suit the fickle international market. I concur with several human rights researchers who believe the attempt to change and distort the ancient motifs of the Mayan loom is part of a larger plan of cultural genocide meant to fracture the Mayan people from their land and culture.

Weaving - Tapestries of Endurance

The imaginary threads of the past and present are woven into the threads of huipil, wore as a surrogate skin of beauty, protection and identity connecting the weaver with the heart of the sky and the heart of the earth. And today, in the humble little highland schools of Guatemala, Mayan children continue to weave the world into being.

Excerpt From Reuters

"Guatemala's Mayans Living Renaissance after Accord"

SAN ANTONIO PALOPO, Guatemala, May 14, 1999

In an unprecedented victory for Mayan groups, Guatemala's Education Minister, last month, ordered school officials in the country's second largest city, Quetzaltenango, to allow two Mayan students to wear traditional dress after they had been threatened with expulsion for refusing to wear the school's uniform.

Under a ring of flaming blue volcanoes, hundreds of Mayan children in bright traditional costumes wound silently through the narrow village streets. Parents and neighbours gazed proudly at the procession, part of a Mayan ritual last month to herald the new millennium. Young priests chanted through loudspeakers and scattered aromatic pine needles. It was a display of ethnic pride and tradition that would have been almost unheard of 10 years ago. Encouraged by the end of 36 years of civil war between the army and Marxist rebels, a renaissance is brewing in Guatemala's Mayan world. After 500 years of discrimination, Mayans are seeking to establish themselves as part of the country's public life, and to gain respect for their religion, language and civil rights.

Indian Tapestry

When I go up to the house of the old weaver,
I watch in admiration
at what comes forth from her mind;
a thousand designs being created
and not a single model from which to copy
the marvellous cloth
with which she will dress
the companion of the True and Faithful One.

Men always ask me
to give the name of the label,
to specify the maker of the design.
But the weaver cannot be pinned down
by designs
nor patterns,
All of her weavings are originals,
there are no repeated patterns.
Her mind is beyond all foresight.
Her able hands do not accept patterns or models.
Whatever comes forth, comes forth,
but she who is will make it.

The colours of the threads
are firm,
blood,
sweat,
perseverance,
tears,
struggle,
and hope.
Colours that do not fade
with time.

The children of the children
of our children
will recognize the seal
of the Old weaver.
maybe then
it will receive a name.
but as a model,
it can never again
be repeated.

Each morning I have seen
how her fingers
choose the threads
one by one.
Her loom makes no noise
and men
give it no importance,
None the less,
the design
that emerges from Her Mind
hour after hour
will appear in the threads
of many colours,
in figures and symbols
which no one ever again,
will be able to erase
or undo.

by Julia Esquivel from *Threatened with Resurrection*

A Recent Interview with Agustin Sapon Morales

(translated by Robin June Hood)

The Creator and the Former has allowed me once again to be with you in this village. So with his permission, I'd love to talk for a minute with the youth. I'm really emotional to see you here working together. I want to encourage (exaltarles) you to work together and to move forward. I'm going to share with you a little bit of my knowledge, which is my people's understanding – who are the Maya. For me, our culture is worth a lot – it has great value.

Each Indian Native has its special way (convocar) of thinking and looking at the world. It has its way of calling to the Creator. It has its way of speaking with Mother Nature. I want to tell you – I've just come from a conference where we had an exchange of experiences with other Indian brothers who have had the same visions. We have the same beliefs. Our roots are well planted. So, I'd like to talk specifically about a few things. Above all – we have to ask – who are we? Where did we come from? and where are we going?

I would like to talk about the meaning of "balance." It's so important – I'll use the blackboard so you can understand this more deeply.

We all know that we are human beings – you know what a human being is – all of you. How can we illustrate this? In my culture, we do it like this so we understand the totality of a place – in the Mayan culture – a place is composed of 20 energies. So we'll see with all of you where we find these 20 energies. Our ancestors studied what it meant to be a person, where do you find these 20 energies in our bodies? I have a hand with five fingers and so do you – and we all have another hand worth five fingers. Adding these two hands – there are 10 energies – and the five toes of the right foot - that makes 15 energies – plus five toes from the left foot. So we get a total of 20 energies. Each digit represents an energy that we all have as people – each digit has a function. For example, with the index finger, we can use it to hold onto a pen or pencil. This other finger, if we are writing with a typewriter – each finger has a function. It means - our fingers don't just have form, they also have functions. If we are missing a finger from the hand - it's incomplete, it would mean we are missing the needed energy.

We are speaking of a complete person – with their 20 digits – in the Mayan culture - the calendar is made up of 20 days – each day has a function; for example, today is a special day for doing ceremonies. In Quiche, the name of the day is written like this "Toh" (July 17, 13 Toh – Yucatee – Muluc). In Spanish "pago" payment, the day of payment, of sacrifice.

Every day, we have certain things – or a relationship with our Creator. There are many ways that we offend the Creator now. So what do we do about all these errors that we commit daily?

We pay a fine or we offer a ceremony – an offering. Another way we can reconcile ourselves with the Creator is to pray. To recognize our weaknesses – that's one thing. So talking about what forms a person – all human beings need to maintain balance. I'll draw it for you. We'll make a triangle. In our lines as human beings, it's very important that we don't forget about the Former and the Creator. That's the most important thing. In the second place is nature, and in the third place is the person. So these are the three things we have to uphold with us everyday.

As a person, we have to maintain a relationship with the Former and the Creator everyday. And it's important that the Creator stays with us everyday. As people, we should always maintain a relationship with nature. As human beings, we must maintain a relationship with Mother Nature everyday. Again, as human beings, we must maintain a relationship with Mother Nature everyday. Mother Nature is with us too, every day. And Mother Nature has a relationship with the Former and the Creator as well. And the Creator manifests in many ways daily in nature. So we have a relationship with the Former and the Creator and with Mother Nature. So how can we increase this relationship? As human beings, to have a good relationship with the Creator, we should give thanks for our life. Give thanks for life and all the elements that sustain us – our good – give thanks for the knowledge that we have – Give greetings (thanks) as we get up, give greetings at mid day, and give thanks at dusk. In all moments of our life. And why is this necessary? Because our life depends on the Former and the Creator. Because, now, he's giving us our opportunity to talk together. So, we have to be thankful for that – because the Creator can speak with us – because he's with good health.

So, if we think about it – there are many benefits we are receiving all the time from the Former and the Creator. So these are ways to maintain a relationship with the Creator. In the Mayan culture, when a child is born, the midwife, upon receiving a child in her arms, gives thanks to the Creator that a new being has been born. And immediately – a ceremony is done. This is a way of giving thanks; this is how the Creator has given life to the mother. In many ways, and through many forms, we can have a relationship with the Creator.

Also, there are many ways of having a relationship with Mother Nature – we must not hurt her in any way – not to destroy nature in any way. Plants have life – like us. It's important to take care of them. Also, we should have a lot of respect for Mother Nature. We need to give thanks for the air that is given to us – without air we couldn't live. Another thing we need to give thanks for is the rain, because of rain we have our elements – crops. So we make ceremonies to give thanks to Mother Nature. I don't know if, here, you have a ceremony to give thanks to Mother Earth? If you do – you must continue doing that.

To maintain this relationship, one has to dance to maintain happiness and joyfulness in this relationship with the Creator – through sacred dancing. There are sacred dances that one does during ceremony – but don't confuse these with those you do in a dance hall. These dances – they don't have value in our culture. I've seen a little how people dance rock – it's like someone is crazy. By contrast, the dance of our ancestors is sacred and done with much respect. Perhaps, the reason why the world is out of balance now is because we haven't maintained this relationship with the Former and the Creator. The cultures that have come here, and in my country, in the conquest, are ones of destruction. And they attempted to break our relationship here, here and here (he draws a triangle).

In school, I never learned this kind of education and I imagine that's the same with you here now. In the big universities, they do not yet teach the proper relationship with the Former and the Creator.

So, to maintain a relationship with ourselves, it's very necessary to respect the Elders. So how do we do this? We do this through respect – in the Maya culture, the way we should respect the Elders is obedience. Also, when a child gets up, they have to bow their heads to the Elder, and the grandfather puts his right hand on the child's head. That's the signal of protection. When finishing eating the sacred elements (meal), children say thanks father, mother, abuelo, hermanos. This is the best way to maintain respect. The response that the grandparents and Elders give is one that God has given this to you. So the reason they say this, is that it isn't just from them that they could eat – but from the Creator the food has been provided.

Something else about respect – it's important that we identify ourselves as Indian people. So, we shouldn't be ashamed of our languages, of our dress, of our customs - there are many things – and we shouldn't be ashamed of them. Unfortunately, the education that we got in school, they have never taught us any of these things. But respect is real and important to communication. It's important to talk with other people, with friends, talk about our lives, talk about our relationship with the Creator, talk about Mother Nature. This is respect that we must share among ourselves as people.

It's really important that these three things be taken into account. We shouldn't forget about the Creator and Mother Nature. As people, we shouldn't feel superior – we shouldn't feel superior to anything in nature – we're a part of Mother Nature. From the Mother Earth comes seeds – also from Mother Earth – when we die – I think your custom is the same as ours – that is, when you have to be buried in the earth - yes or no? What is your custom? So Mother Earth receives us when we are dead in her arms – it's like our Mother who gives us affection – and that's how it is with Mother Earth. It's a Mayan custom to kiss the Mother Earth three times before you're going to work the earth or plant – you must ask permission from the Creator and from Mother Earth – saying this prayer:

Heart of the Sky
Hearth of the Earth
Please permit me to touch or damage your sacred creation
Mother Nature
Please forgive me if I damage your face
I only do this only of necessity because I'm hungry
Forgive me.

And then you kiss it three times – this is the way of asking permission. Every day, farmers do this. And after they're finished their work of the day – many give thanks for having being given that day of work in the country. These experiences of our (Elders) ancestors are really important for our lives – they give us a very straight road, important teachers – so our young people must appreciate the wisdom of our ancestors.

Perhaps in school – they have said that your ancestors were ignorant - that they weren't people but savage animals – but NO they were Indian people – they were philosophers – they had great knowledge – they studied what we know as astronomy, they understood and measured time, they knew how many asteroids there were in space. What has happened – is that they weren't given the opportunity to advance in these sciences when the foreign invasion – conquest – happened in each country. That's when the science of our ancestors ended. So today, with young people, we have to work to recover this. Because everywhere in the world – Mother Nature and the environment is being destroyed – in my country there are great droughts, and why are these number of droughts happening? Because of lack of respect for Mother Nature.

And does the European culture give thanks to the Mother when they are opening up a road? Does the logger kiss the earth three times before he moves into the forest? This European culture they feel superior to nature – and, at the same time, they often don't even have respect for people.

During the invasion - how many of our ancestors were assassinated by these invaders? For what was important to them was "wealth," "riches" – they wanted to be millionaires. It didn't matter to them if it was Mother Nature or if it was a person, they destroyed it. So comparing this to the beliefs of the Europeans – it's completely different. Maybe this is difficult to understand – but we have to make the effort. And where is this knowledge? It's in the grandfather here – with other people – you must talk with them.

Maybe our grandfather here does not have a book where he can show you this, but the great book that he has is his memory, his experience, of how to maintain a relationship with the Creator. And of how to relate to Mother Nature and how to treat each other as people. But, I don't want to get you tired – maybe you're tired now. But I ask you to respect your parents and Elders – this is a beautiful thing to respect your Elders. Respect means to take into account the instructions they give us if they correct us - to listen to that and not to oppose them. Because, if you do that, you are sinning in front of the Creator – and Mother Nature – because, as people, we bring this all together.

So thanks – maybe another time we can talk more. To finish, I think it's important – perhaps Spanish is as hard for you as English is for us and we have a book called Mayan Translation – so that she translates it into English. What's important right now is the combination of ideas so that we can recreate our Indian identity together.

So I'll finish with a phrase:

As Indian nations
Before the invasion
We were a big tree
With large branches and many leaves and fruits
Our waist was large
When the invaders came
They began to cut the fruit -
Our grandfathers cut our leaves
They left the branches bare
They left is without branches
With gunshots - now it's sure they've cut our trunk
But they couldn't destroy our roots
and how they're growing up -
the tree is growing again
It has branches, and flowers
and one day we'll have fruits.

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The Cry of the Loon: Mysterious, Mournful, Remembering Place

Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley

Waqaa, greetings to each and every one of you. Some of you may well be asking why I have chosen the *tunutellek* as my subject for this occasion? The Yupiaq name means "that which is packing something." Indeed, the loon is carrying a heavy burden.

Wherever the loon exists, there are Native people, and you will have many loon stories that are mystical and magical in their content. Among them is the story of the blind boy who is made to see by the loon diving into the water with the boy on its back. This is repeated three times. With each dive and emergence, the boy could see a little clearer and, on its third emergence, the boy could see clearly. The loon helped the boy to see and, likewise, it can help us to understand ourselves and see our connection to Mother Earth today.

Listen to the call of the loon. Its call is God-given through nature. It has its own language and is understood by others of its kind and other creatures. Only we, with our ability to think and rationalize, do not understand, because we listen only with the mind, not with mind and heart well sprinkled with intuition. To some, the call is eerie, as if some bad thing is about to happen. Maybe an *alangguk*, an apparition of some kind, is about to appear. It conjures up many thoughts that are not based on "what is," but on "what if." This is the fear that most of us face as a Native people, especially when thinking about changing education. "What if" the educators, legislators and powers that be do not believe that this could be done? But, regardless, we must take those steps necessary to change education so that it takes into consideration, in fact makes, an educational system based on our own tribal worldviews. When thought of in that context, then it includes our Native languages, ways of generating knowledge, research, ways of making things, and ways for using them respectfully.

Our Native languages come from the land. They are derived from the land. It is the language of the land that makes our Native people live in harmony with nature.

According to the Muskogee Cree, Bear Heart, harmony is a tolerance, a forgiving, a blending. This is what our Native languages allow us to do. Our Native words come from the creatures and things of Mother Earth naming themselves, defining themselves through action words - that's reality! Nature is our teacher. Information and rationality are a small segment of knowing and learning. In the use of our Native languages, we come to live life intimately, because we are enmeshed in it rather than looking at it from a distance through a microscope or telescope. It then behooves that we relearn our languages and learn to live close to nature to regain our health as a Native people. When we have that vision and goal, and work toward it, then we will have harmony; we will have tolerance; we will forgive; and we will again blend into our world. We will be using our five senses and intuition to learn about our place. The loon never lost its spiritual vision. It has a love for life, its environment and its creator. Its education was from Mother Earth for the heart, for it to become creative and to know how to live in its community, its habitat.

The loon still gets messages from its unconscious with new thoughts or solutions to problems. We, as human beings, have cluttered up our conscious minds with information and rational thinking, so that our world of dreams is no longer sought through meditation, vision questing, fasting and looking deep into the silence within us for direction. Not only have we become socio-politico-economic dependants, but we depend on outside sources to take care of our problems, whether it's individual, family or community. You see, the loon looks into its inner ecology knowing that no one else can do that for it. It knows that it is incumbent upon itself to look out for its own interests. In order for us to receive guidance and direction for our lives, we must relearn what the loon does naturally. We must look into ourselves where power and strength lie and tap into it to begin to address our own problems.

Another strength of the loon is that it teaches and nurtures its young to live as a loon. It does not require that someone else do the educating. The loon develops the loon worldview of its young closely connected to others and its place. As it migrates from place to place, it remembers and appreciates the diversity and beauty of nature. It nurtures its offspring to become independent, yet knowing its dependence on the abundance of nature to succor its needs. It teaches its young to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This is true love; this is unconditional love that we need in this world. A love for self, a love for others, and a love for place, giving one a sense of responsibility to take care of oneself, to care for others and the environment that one lives in. The loon's cry is remembering a place that was harmonious, full of the beauty and diversity that nature so loves. This is heart talk! This is science – knowing place.

Very much like our Native people, the loon's life is not all roses and peace. The loon has a few problems, such as taking off. It is very much like the Wright brothers in their early experiments at becoming airborne. The little home-made engine revs up, but has just enough power for it to barely get off the ground. Just as the under-powered plane, the loon frantically flaps its wings and seemingly runs across the water's surface. Once in awhile, the loon will crash onto the tundra, but it crawls back into the lake somehow and tries again. We, as a Native people, are testing our wings and power! If we find that some of our ideas do not work, we need to go back and try again, maybe with a different approach and tools. We must not be overly ambitious by overplaying our knowledge and abilities, but recognize our limitations as human beings. We must do that which we know we can succeed at first, and then progress to more difficult tasks. If we fail, we must NEVER GIVE UP!

The sad fact about this precious bird, the loon, is that it is losing ground in its efforts to survive. Our Canadian friends look upon it with great respect – so much so that it is on their one- and two-dollar coins. They are called the "loonie" and "twoonie". It is a known fact that the loon numbers are growing smaller at a fast rate across the North. There is a problem that is so ominous and insidious that it is overwhelming the loon. It is not of its own making. It is human-made pollution of chemical, biological, nuclear and noise, which is destroying its habitat. It is we, humans, who are destroying its habit and, unfortunately, as we destroy its habitat, we are destroying ourselves in the process.

The loon may well ask, "What was the question that makes technology the answer in the first place? Who asked it and when?" Technology is the product of human rationality, though it is inherently neutral, until it is put to use for some human purpose. Take, for example, the computer. Some think it has the capacity to solve many of our problems. It is speedy and answers questions with facts the humans have fed into it. However, I say use it sparingly, as a tool. Too often, it encourages individualism to the point of isolationism. The excessive user wants to be alone with a stupid machine. If you feed it garbage, you get garbage in return. It takes away clear thinking, problem-solving skills and, above all, removes common sense.

Modern technology lends weight to a society that is inclined to take and take from the natural environment, to make things without giving back. It wants to cut into Mother Earth to remove its natural resources. It entices people to want more of its products. In so doing, Indigenous people, creatures, plants and landforms become the victims of Euro-centric concepts of progress and development. They are merely removed as detritus and, in the process, we destroy a people and their place. The loon's mournful cry is in recognition of this needless destruction that is taking place by "bigger and better" technological machines of devastation.

The mournful cry of the loon is much aware of its dwindling food sources, the inability of some of its eggs to hatch, and its members succumbing to poisons and new diseases. It recognizes that to not have children, to not have family, to not have a community, is to be scattered, to be falling apart. Many of our Native families are falling apart. It recognizes that there are healthy Native families in the villages. But, I would say that these healthy families are too often surrounded by, and are witnesses to, a holocaust of pain and misery. Our villages are, in essence, communities in name only. They are often not working together for the common good as in the old days. The unhealthy and dysfunctional families have youngsters seven, eight or nine years old who are raising and taking care of their younger siblings. Why should I worry about these young children acting as parents? Because these youngsters are missing an important aspect of their young lives – that of being a child! A child is to be loved by parents, to be nurtured and taken care of by parents, to play as a child, to talk as a child, to imagine as a child. Oh, the yearning of the child just to be a child! Many children miss this growing-up phase.

As if this was not enough, we allow video games, movies and television to become babysitters while we go out and party, play bingo, gamble, and do things that make us sicker. While the children are viewing and doing these things, they are seeing killing, cheating, lying, men beating women and children, all kinds of sex, adult language, and all other undesirable aspects of life. The mournful cry of the loon is reminding us of the time when there were secrets from children, things that were not to be known by them until they were considered ready. Today, there are no secrets in the modern media. Go out on the playground, a school party, or anywhere youngsters are gathered. Listen to their language! You will hear a lot of foul language. The language that the youngsters use is an indicator of how bad the situation has become. There is no respect for parents, teachers, elders and, most certainly, for other young people.

We see children having children, children killing children, children killing elders, children committing suicide, children dropping out of school, children without hope – sad children. What a sad state for us to be in!

These states of affairs contribute to the loss of childhood. We must gain control of what the children learn, see and do. We do this by regaining control of our own lives. We control this by turning off the television during dinner time so that heart talk can take place. Heart talk is kind, gentle talk that makes one want to be polite to everyone and everything around them. This talk allows members to know each other, what their likes and dislikes are, to know of problems they are having with friends, siblings and school. It allows the family to find out what they would like to see change in the home and why. This is where a family that loves and talks together becomes stronger because they know each other, love and care for one another. This is family.

The loon does not blame anyone even though its environment is rife with problems and pollution beyond its control. Its mournful call reminds us that we, as humans, must do our part to regenerate and reciprocate with nature. We, the Native people, must quit blaming others for our problems. When we blame others, we are saying that someone else should take care of the problem and deal with our feelings about the situation. We don't like what has been happening in the schools, so we blame the state, district and teachers. We are saying to them, "take care of the problem," and "take care of my hurt and confused feelings about my own education. Please, heal me." Why should we continue to do this? Why should we continue to say how confused and mixed-up we are by the new civilization that has come to our villages?

Now, we have frame houses that are poorly insulated, built on stilts and expensive to maintain. But, we are "educated," because we no longer live in sod houses. We have snowmobiles instead of dog teams that can often save our lives. We have flush toilets with Lysol cleaners that empty into an unhealthy lagoon, thereby making it unnecessary for us to go outdoors in all kinds of weather, whereby nature can take care of natural wastes in a natural way. But, we are educated. We have antibiotics and hormone-laced hamburgers instead of smoked dry fish which is more healthful. We use toilet paper which kills trees instead of sphagnum moss which prevents rash and the spread of germs. But, are we educated! So well educated as to think our Native languages and cultures are no longer useful. This is what the loon is mourning. Why have we, the Native people, given up? Giving up has been a very costly venture to us as a Native people. But, we are educated.

The loon's standards of life and making a living are impeccable, thus allowing it to live successfully for many thousands of years. Its basic standard is respect – a respect for the Greater Being, spirits, others' rights to live a life that fits their needs, and a respect for the environment. It is taught aspects of its place by its parents using all five senses. The young are taught how to play; taught the rituals of swimming, diving and making its call; taught how to select a nesting place; taught the art of making a nest; taught to appreciate the life forms within its place; and taught to live a life that is interacting with all that is around it. It knows that it is a loon and will always remember that. Yes, its standards are simple and intertwined, leading to a life that is full of meaning and direction.

For those of us who are Indigenous or Native people, we must resurrect our ways of recognizing and paying homage to the Ellam Yua spirits and nature. When we regain our spirituality, we will again learn to laugh from our hearts and play because "those who know how to play can easily leap over the adversaries of life. And one who knows how to sing and laugh never brews mischief" (an Iglulik proverb). When we awake at dawn and look at the sun rising and life begins to stir again, this is mysterious. The loon is telling us of this mystery of life – its mysterious connection to us. This is sacred. When we begin to understand this, we will begin to change our relationship with our environment. We will begin to experience a need for a new existence. I am happy to state that among the Alaska Native people, the Yupiat have striven for, and are heading for, a new existence! We have many Yupiat Elders and others who have become teachers for all of us, and all point to the same direction - a new consciousness for life. A new consciousness that is vibrantly traditional, full of truth, beauty, health, happiness and love. These five attributes of life provide the foundation for the answers to the questions that each and every one of us will ask ourselves as to the type of life that we want to pursue. As we put this into practice, we will become the models of existence for now and in the future.

In this contemporary world of chaos, we can create our own reality. We can re-create ourselves as we want to be. We have the power within us to do this. We have three things that will help us to do this. First, we have our past through myths, stories, rituals and ceremonies. We can draw from them that which will help us reconstruct, and dispense with those that will not be of help to us in our efforts.

Secondly, we have our imagination and ability to see what we would like to be in the future. What will we look like? What will we live in? How will we make our living? What kinds of things will we possess? How will we recognize the spiritual?

Lastly, we have our rational, thinking minds that react to things around us and, thus, enable us to connect with things as they are now. We know what we are, know what others think of us, know how we try to make a living, know how the federal and state governments work against us, and know how we react to negative, as well as positive, things that happen to us. Knowing these time and thought spirals can help us to reconstruct our reality and ourselves.

It is time that we make songs about alcohol and drugs, telling of their power over us, telling us it is now time for us to give up and be released from their use, and give up or relinquish our emotional ties to these destructive elements. If we merely release these from our lives, we will return to them. So it is absolutely necessary that we give up our emotional ties to these, i.e., I do it because it makes me feel good and allows me to talk and mix with people. This is an emotional tie that will get you back to it.

The loon reminds us that its standards for life are high, and so should ours be. In looking at the federal and state educational standards, I get confused as to the real meaning of them. Perhaps it's the fragmented and convoluted approach by fields of study that make this so. It does not show me a need for a change in education. There is an old Chinese saying that goes something like this: "When there is someone pointing at the moon, only the idiot looks at the finger!" These Euro-centric standards require that we look at the content of the various fields of study. They tell us what our students are purportedly to know at the end of secondary school. Content, thus information accumulation and processing, seems to be of overriding importance. As I've said before, information and rationality are a very small part of learning. But those alone fail to give direction and wholeness to the standards. This is not to say that they are useless; but, they can be if left alone.

The needed additional ingredients are the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools.[1] These say to me that there needs to be a change in the whole of education, not only schooling. Schooling is that which happens in the structure called the school. Education is that which happens within and outside the family, school, and community. The latter is all-inclusive. In reading and thinking about the standards, I get the distinct feeling that there is a need to change the way that we teach, the things that we teach about, the materials we use, how we measure growth and development, and where things are taught. The cultural standards behoove us to make sure that something is done to accommodate the Native thought-worlds and worldviews. The loon would desire this for its survival and ours. We are now on that pathway.

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[1] See attached addendum.

In conclusion, the cry of the loon is encouraging us to balance our physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual selves to begin to live lives that feel just right, walking peacefully and expressing it to others in our own Native languages. *Piurciqukut Yuluta pitallketuluta* - "we will become people living a life that feels just right."

Quyana!

Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools

Through a series of regional and statewide meetings associated with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (with funding provided by the National Science Foundation and the Annenberg Rural Challenge, and administrative support from the Alaska Federation of Natives, in collaboration with the University of Alaska), Alaska Native educators have developed the "Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools" for consideration by educators serving Native students around the state. Though the emphasis is on rural schools serving Native communities, many of the standards are applicable to all students and communities because they focus curricular attention on in-depth study of the surrounding physical and cultural environment in which the school is situated, while recognizing the unique contribution that Indigenous people can make to such study as long-term inhabitants who have accumulated extensive specialized knowledge related to that environment.

The cultural standards outlined in this document are not intended to be inclusive, exclusive or conclusive, and, thus, should be reviewed and adapted to fit local needs. Each school, community and related organization should consider which of these standards are appropriate and which are not, and when necessary, develop additional cultural standards to accommodate local circumstances. Terms should be interpreted to fit local conventions, especially with reference to meanings associated with the definition of Elder, traditional, spirituality, or anything relating to the use of the local language. Where differences of interpretation exist, they should be respected and accommodated to the maximum extent possible. The cultural standards are not intended to produce standardization, but, rather, to encourage schools to nurture and build upon the rich and varied cultural traditions that continue to be practiced in communities throughout Alaska.

Some of the multiple uses to which these cultural standards may be put are as follows:

1. They may be used as a basis for reviewing school or district-level goals, policies and practices with regard to the curriculum and pedagogy being implemented in each community or cultural area.

2. They may be used by a local community to examine the kind of home/family environment and parenting support systems that are provided for the upbringing of its children.
3. They may be used to devise locally appropriate ways to review student and teacher performance as it relates to nurturing and practicing culturally healthy behavior, including serving as potential graduation requirements for students.
4. They may be used to strengthen the commitment to revitalizing the local language and culture and fostering the involvement of Elders as an educational resource.
5. They may be used to guide the preparation and orientation of teachers in ways that help them attend to the cultural well-being of their students.
6. They may serve as criteria against which to evaluate educational programs intended to address the cultural needs of students.
7. They may be used to guide the formation of state-level policies and regulations and the allocation of resources in support of equal educational opportunities for all children in Alaska.

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

A. Culturally knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community.

Student who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- assume responsibility for their role in relation to the well-being of the cultural community and their life-long obligations as a community member;
- recount their own genealogy and family history;
- acquire and pass on the traditions of their community through oral and written history;
- practice their traditional responsibilities to the surrounding environment;
- reflect, through their own actions, the critical role that the local heritage language plays in fostering a sense of who they are and how they understand the world around them;
- live a life in accordance with the cultural values and traditions of the local community and integrate them into their everyday behavior;
- determine the place of their cultural community in the regional, state, national and international, political and economic systems.

B. Culturally knowledgeable students are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- acquire insights from other cultures without diminishing the integrity of their own;
- make effective use of the knowledge, skills and ways of knowing from their own cultural traditions to learn about the larger world in which they live;
- make appropriate choices regarding the long-term consequences of their actions;
- identify appropriate forms of technology and anticipate the consequences of their use for improving the quality of life in the community.

C. Culturally knowledgeable students are able to actively participate in various cultural environments.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- perform subsistence activities in ways that are appropriate to local cultural traditions;
- make constructive contributions to the governance of their community and the well-being of their family;
- attain a healthy lifestyle through which they are able to maintain their own social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual well-being.
- enter into and function effectively in a variety of cultural settings.

D. Culturally knowledgeable students are able to engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with Elders;
- participate in, and make constructive contributions to, the learning activities associated with a traditional camp environment;
- gather oral and written history information from the local community and provide an appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance;
- identify and utilize appropriate sources of cultural knowledge to find solutions to everyday problems;
- engage in a realistic self-assessment to identify strengths and needs and make appropriate decisions to enhance life skills.

E. Culturally knowledgeable students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- recognize and build upon the inter-relationships that exist among the spiritual, natural, and human realms in the world around them, as reflected in their own cultural traditions and beliefs, as well as those of others;
- understand the ecology and geography of the bio-region they inhabit;
- demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between world view and the way knowledge is formed and used;
- determine how ideas and concepts from one knowledge system relate to those derived from other knowledge systems;
- recognize how and why cultures change over time;
- anticipate the changes that occur when different cultural systems come in contact with one another;
- determine how cultural values and beliefs influence the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds;
- identify and appreciate who they are and their place in the world.

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR EDUCATORS

A. Culturally responsive educators incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching into their work.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- recognize the validity and integrity of the traditional knowledge system;
- utilize Elders' expertise in multiple ways in their teaching;
- provide opportunities and time for students to learn in settings where local cultural knowledge and skills are naturally relevant;
- provide opportunities for students to learn through observation and hands-on demonstration of cultural knowledge and skills;
- adhere to the cultural and intellectual property rights that pertain to all aspects of the local knowledge they are addressing;
- continually involve themselves in learning about the local culture.

B. Culturally responsive educators use the local environment and community resources on a regular basis to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of the students.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- regularly engage students in appropriate projects and experiential learning activities in the surrounding environment;
- utilize traditional settings such as camps as learning environments for transmitting both cultural and academic knowledge and skills;
- provide integrated learning activities organized around themes of local significance and across subject areas;
- are knowledgeable in the areas of local history and cultural tradition that may have bearing on their work as a teacher, including the appropriate times for certain knowledge to be taught;
- seek to ground all teaching in a constructive process built on a local cultural foundation.

C. Culturally responsive educators participate in community events and activities in an appropriate and supportive way.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- become active members of the community in which they teach and make positive and culturally appropriate contributions to the well-being of that community;
- exercise professional responsibilities in the context of local cultural traditions and expectations;
- maintain a close working relationship with, and make appropriate use of, the cultural and professional expertise of their co-workers from the local community.

D. Culturally responsive educators work closely with parents to achieve a high level of complementary educational expectations between home and school.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- promote extensive community and parental interaction and involvement in their children's education;
- involve Elders, parents and local leaders in all aspects of instructional planning and implementation;
- seek to continually learn about and build upon the cultural knowledge that students bring with them from their homes and community;

- seek to learn the local heritage language and promote its use in their teaching.

E. Culturally responsive educators recognize the full educational potential of each student and provide the challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- recognize cultural differences as positive attributes around which to build appropriate educational experiences;
- provide learning opportunities that help students recognize the integrity of the knowledge they bring with them and use that knowledge as a springboard to new understandings;
- reinforce the students' sense of cultural identity and place in the world;
- acquaint students with the world beyond their home community in ways that expand their horizons while strengthening their own identities;
- recognize the need for all people to understand the importance of learning about other cultures and appreciating what each has to offer.

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR CURRICULUM

A. A culturally responsive curriculum reinforces the integrity of the cultural knowledge that students bring with them.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- recognizes that all knowledge is imbedded in a larger system of cultural beliefs, values, and practices, each with its own integrity and interconnectedness;
- ensures that students acquire not only the surface knowledge of their culture, but are also well grounded in the deeper aspects of the associated beliefs and practices;
- incorporates contemporary adaptations along with the historical and traditional aspects of the local culture;
- respects and validates knowledge that has been derived from a variety of cultural traditions;
- provides opportunities for students to study all subjects starting from a base in the local knowledge system.

B. A culturally responsive curriculum recognizes cultural knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past,

but continues to grow through the present and into the future.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- recognizes the contemporary validity of much of the traditional cultural knowledge, values, and beliefs, and grounds students' learning in the principles and practices associated with that knowledge;
- provides students with an understanding of the dynamics of cultural systems as they change over time, and as they are impacted by external forces;
- incorporates the in-depth study of unique elements of contemporary life in Native communities in Alaska, such as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, subsistence, sovereignty and self-determination.

C. A culturally responsive curriculum uses the local language and cultural knowledge as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- utilizes the local language as a base from which to learn the deeper meanings of the local cultural knowledge, values, beliefs and practices;
- recognizes the depth of knowledge that is associated with the long inhabitation of a particular place and utilizes the study of "place" as a basis for the comparative analysis of contemporary social, political and economic systems;
- incorporates language and cultural immersion experiences wherever in-depth cultural understanding is necessary;
- views all community members as potential teachers and all events in the community as potential learning opportunities;
- treats local cultural knowledge as a means to acquire the conventional curriculum content as outlined in state standards, as well as an end in itself;
- makes appropriate use of modern tools and technology to help document and transmit traditional cultural knowledge;
- is sensitive to traditional cultural protocol, including the role of spirituality, as it relates to appropriate uses of local knowledge.

D. A culturally responsive curriculum fosters a complementary relationship across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- draws parallels between knowledge derived from oral tradition and that derived from books;

- engages students in the construction of new knowledge and understandings that contribute to an ever-expanding view of the world.

E. A culturally responsive curriculum situates local knowledge and actions in a global context.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- encourages students to consider the inter-relationship between their local circumstances and the global community;
- conveys to students that every culture and community contributes to, at the same time that it receives from, the global knowledge base;
- prepares students to "think globally, act locally."

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOLS

A. A culturally responsive school fosters the on-going participation of Elders in all aspects of the schooling process.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- maintains multiple avenues for Elders to interact formally and informally with students at all times;
- provides opportunities for students to regularly engage in the documenting of Elders' cultural knowledge and produce appropriate print and multimedia materials that share this knowledge with others;
- includes explicit statements regarding the cultural values that are fostered in the community and integrates those values in all aspects of the school program and operation;
- utilizes educational models that are grounded in the traditional world view and ways of knowing associated with the cultural knowledge system reflected in the community.

B. A culturally responsive school provides multiple avenues for students to access the learning that is offered, as well as multiple forms of assessment for students to demonstrate what they have learned.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- utilizes a broad range of culturally appropriate performance standards to assess student knowledge and skills;
- encourages and supports experientially oriented approaches to education that make extensive use of community-based resources and expertise;

- provides cultural and language immersion programs in which students acquire in-depth understanding of the culture of which they are members;
- helps students develop the capacity to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and make appropriate decisions based on such a self-assessment.

C. A culturally responsive school provides opportunities for students to learn in and/or about their heritage language.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- provides language immersion opportunities for students who wish to learn in their heritage language;
- offers courses that acquaint all students with the heritage language of the local community;
- makes available reading materials and courses through which students can acquire literacy in the heritage language;
- provides opportunities for teachers to gain familiarity with the heritage language of the students they teach through summer immersion experiences.

D. A culturally responsive school has a high level of involvement of professional staff who are of the same cultural background as the students with whom they are working.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- encourages and supports the professional development of local personnel to assume teaching and administrative roles in the school;
- recruits and hires teachers whose background is similar to that of the students they will be teaching;
- provides a cultural orientation camp and mentoring program for new teachers to learn about, and adjust to, the cultural expectations and practices of the community and school;
- fosters and supports opportunities for teachers to participate in professional activities and associations that help them expand their repertoire of cultural knowledge and pedagogical skills.

E. A culturally responsive school consists of facilities that are compatible with the community environment in which they are situated.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- provides a physical environment that is inviting and readily accessible for local people to enter and utilize;

- makes use of facilities throughout the community to demonstrate that education is a community-wide process involving everyone as teachers;
- utilizes local expertise, including students, to provide culturally appropriate displays of arts, crafts and other forms of decoration and space design.

F. A culturally responsive school fosters extensive on-going participation, communication and interaction between school and community personnel.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- holds regular formal and informal events bringing together students, parents, teachers and other school and community personnel to review, evaluate and plan the educational program that is being offered;
- provides regular opportunities for local and regional board deliberations and decision-making on policy, program and personnel issues related to the school;
- sponsors on-going activities and events in the school and community that celebrate and provide opportunities for students to put into practice and display their knowledge of local cultural traditions.

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITIES

A. A culturally supportive community incorporates the practice of local cultural traditions in its everyday affairs.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- provides respected Elders with a place of honor in community functions;
- models culturally appropriate behavior in the day-to-day life of the community;
- utilizes traditional child-rearing and parenting practices that reinforce a sense of identity and belonging;
- organizes and encourages participation of members from all ages in regular community-wide, family-oriented events;
- incorporates and reinforces traditional cultural values and beliefs in all formal and informal community functions.

B. A culturally supportive community nurtures the use of the local heritage language.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- recognizes the role that language plays in conveying the deeper aspects of cultural knowledge and traditions;

- sponsors local heritage language immersion opportunities for young children when they are at the critical age for language learning;
- encourages the use of the local heritage language whenever possible in the everyday affairs of the community, including meetings, cultural events, print materials and broadcast media;
- assists in the preparation of curriculum resource material in the local heritage language for use in the school;
- provides simultaneous translation services for public meetings where persons unfamiliar with the local heritage language are participants.

C. A culturally supportive community takes an active role in the education of all its members.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- encourages broad-based participation of parents in all aspects of their children's education, both in and out of school;
- ensures active participation by community members in reviewing all local, regional and state initiatives that have bearing on the education of their children;
- encourages and supports members of the local community who wish to pursue further education to assume teaching and administrative roles in the school;
- engages in subsistence activities, sponsors cultural camps, and hosts community events that provide an opportunity for children to actively participate in and learn appropriate cultural values and behavior;
- provides opportunities for all community members to acquire and practice the appropriate knowledge and skills associated with local cultural traditions.

D. A culturally supportive community nurtures family responsibility, sense of belonging, and cultural identity.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- fosters cross-generational sharing of parenting and child-rearing practices;
- creates a supportive environment for youth to participate in local affairs and acquire the skills to be contributing members of the community;
- adopts the adage, "It takes the whole village to raise a child."

E. A culturally supportive community assists teachers in learning and utilizing local cultural traditions and practices.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- sponsors a cultural orientation camp and community mentoring program for new teachers to learn about, and adjust to, the cultural expectations and practices of the community;
- encourages teachers to make use of facilities and expertise in the community to demonstrate that education is a community-wide process involving everyone as teachers;
- sponsors regular community/school potlucks to celebrate the work of students and teachers and to promote on-going interaction and communication between teachers and parents;
- attempts to articulate the cultural knowledge, values and beliefs that it wishes teachers to incorporate into the school curriculum;
- establishes a program to ensure the availability of Elders' expertise in all aspects of the educational program in the school.

F. A culturally supportive community contributes to all aspects of curriculum design and implementation in the local school.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- takes an active part in the development of the mission, goals and content of the local educational program;
- promotes the active involvement of students with Elders in the documentation and preservation of traditional knowledge through a variety of print and multimedia formats;
- facilitates teacher involvement in community activities and encourages the use of the local environment as a curricular resource;
- promotes parental involvement in all aspects of their children's educational experience.

Culturally Appropriate Healing and Counselling: One Woman's Path Toward Healing

Brenda Isabel Wastasecoot

Introduction

As I sit to write, I am faced with myself, my feelings, my past. My story sits in my heart – it aches with grief, stiffens with old fear, then flutters with remembering that I survived – it's over. I never have to go back there to be victimized again. My mind swims – dodging the piercing images that replay on any slight trigger from my day – a sound, a smell, a situation that holds some minute similarity to the way I was victimized. My body moves forward or shrinks back – releasing emotions or holding it in. In the library, I hold it in – at home, I shed my tears. This is my experience as I attempt to write about Native healing journeys.

Today, I am thirty-six years old. Thirty years have passed, yet I am not completely free of my pain. Yesterday, I met with three friends – a Metis woman, a white woman, and a white man. We took turns telling what happened to us – we cried, yelled, and screamed, but mostly we told; we told every detail that we have held inside ourselves – in our throats, in our bowels, arms, legs, faces, eyes, minds – all having been silent and stiff with terror for years.

Telling our stories to each other has brought us a growing freedom from our past hurts. By telling our stories, we have contradicted the fear of telling, the "need" to be silent, the shame of having been sexually abused. The more we tell what happened to us, the more we rise above and out of our imprisonment and isolation. As Hill (1995) writes, "One of the hardest steps in recovery is to tell one's secrets, to look into the past and to explore all the painful memories and circumstances, and bring them into the open. But recovery must also be emotional healing. It is not enough to just talk about painful memories. We need to look at the memories, deal with the emotions attached to those memories, and release the pain" (p. 97).

We have made a commitment to each other to meet once a month to work on our early sexual memories, because they are the memories that keep us feeling ashamed, acting as if we had a choice in being victimized as children. The feeling of powerlessness has a lasting and almost permanent impact on us, as described by Bagley and King (1990):

> Repeated invasions of the child's territory and body space reinforce his or her self-perception as a victim. Prolonged assaults may lead to a permanent sense of powerlessness in the victim, and an inability to avoid further victimization, be it sexual, social, or economic (p. 116).

I know that the work I do on my childhood sexual abuse will help me in my life – as a parent, I can see how it helps me give my child the love and care she needs. It helps me get my life back – get myself back. Kunzman (1990) writes about parents being afraid of passing the abuse on or that the chaos they experienced will affect their own parenting. I do this healing work to be the best parent I can be, so that my child will at least have a good start in life.

Yesterday, we ended our circle with "What do we appreciate about ourselves?" and "What do we like about working on our early sexual memories?" To the second question, I answered that "I like that I get to feel close to people again."

my people
I cherish you
I feel your pain
I cry with you

I remember this one time at the age of seven or eight, feeling so terribly hurt by something one of my siblings said or did to me. It was one of those times when my body could not hold in the pain of what felt like a wave of grief. This one time, the tears waited for me to find a safe place where I could be alone to cry. If I let it go with one of my siblings nearby, I knew I would be further harassed for showing my feelings around him. For whatever reason, he could not listen to me cry.

So with all my strength, I held my pain in my throat and walked a safe distance away from my house to let the tears fall down my face and quietly sob so no one could hear me. At that young age, I knew my body needed to release the pain with flowing tears and sounds from my broken heart. In this way, I survived. I doubt that my brothers and sisters were ever allowed to cry at Residential School. I believe that they and many other children had to cry alone.

> Residential Schools robbed me as a child. It robbed me of everything. I had nobody to turn to, not my parents, not my sisters, no one. And witnessing abuse ... and being abused myself ... after that, I was always full of hate and fear (Assembly of First Nations, 1994, 2).

This makes me think of how many of my people have had to cry alone. If we can't cry together, we end up having to isolate ourselves just to feel safe. I wonder why we have to go somewhere to cry by ourselves when we come from a heritage of customs, rituals, ceremonies, and traditions that encourage healing, community, and wellness. This is talked about extensively in a report by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (Clarkson, 1992):

> The whole system of Indigenous thought is a reflection of this balance of mind, body and spirit. The mechanisms by which this was delivered on a day to day basis were geared to ensuring that the balance was maintained. The teachings that have been given to us are our guidelines and standards that are meant to ensure that we continue to maintain the balance. The healing methods passed to us are the practical applications of the healing process to restore balance when we find ourselves moving in a different direction other than the one provided (p. 53).

Words from my cousins still echo in my mind at times when I need to cry. To help each other, or to show we cared but didn't know what to do with each other's pain, we would say, "Don't cry, your tears will freeze and your eyelids will get frozen together." Abandoned children, we huddled outside my house down the flats waiting for a taxi cab to bring our parents back home from the bars in town.

Harsher words were used to silence me as I got older. One very violent assault on my small body when I was five left me deciding to never cry again. To cry meant feeling the pain, feeling how hopeless and powerless I was. Who wants to feel like that? I learned ways to keep myself numb. Alcohol became my escape from the devastation, shock, shame and rage in my heart. I used it to forget what happened to me. I knew then, by age nine, that alcohol was helping everyone else forget what happened to them, it kept them numb also. "Many sexually abused children have developed alcohol and/or drug dependencies which must be dealt with in addition to the problems related to the sexual abuse" (Martens, Daily, Hodgson, 1988).

I will never forget one young boy who died at a young age of alcohol poisoning. I looked into his eyes and saw what was happening to him. He was just like me, trying to stay numb yet feeling very alone and terrified. I looked into the eyes of everyone around me and saw my people dying inside; I wondered why no one was helping us, why was the world letting this happen? I concluded that it must be because we were not important, I was not important.

I decided that I would forget everything that happened to me and everything that I saw until I got big enough to stop it. My plan was to survive; then, when I got big, I would go around and look in all the people's windows to see that no child was being raped. It was a good plan and it helped me to rest and play for awhile.

I sought help for many years. Once, in Grade 4, I whispered into a teacher's ear, as loudly as I could manage without spilling my shame onto her, I thought. "Could you take me home with you?" She did not respond.

Another time, I saw a psychiatrist when I was fourteen. It was set up for me to see him once a month during the time that I became suicidal. I met with him once. He, a white man with a starched shirt and tie, looked directly at me and through me, it seemed, as if he was looking for something, some clue as to what exactly was wrong with me. This was unbearable, uncomfortable and humiliating. At the end of the session, I was facing the wall with my back towards him. I was grateful that I never had to be alone with him again.

I had come to fear men, to distrust them and feel inferior in their presence. I had worn the feelings of shame and inferiority for so long that I came to believe there was something wrong with me. Sheehan (1992) talks about the origin of shame, a cloak I had worn for many years.

> Feelings of shame stem from negative self-evaluations that undermine our self-confidence. Often, these negative self-evaluations are rooted in childhood experiences in which we were not nurtured as a valuable person and, thus, we falsely concluded that we were worthless (p. 1).

A Native Public Health Nurse, who had a good picture of what was happening to me, did not send me away with pills, but listened and cared. She was the first person I told about the sexual abuse. I felt I could trust her; she was from my community and had similar experiences. What made me decide to trust her was that she told me what happened to her. She trusted me first. It was her caring and attention that got me out of my depression, and my alcoholism was arrested for a time. As a teenager, living in the group home, I stayed sober, came home on time and went to school everyday, got good grades; a real "goody-goody" as I had come to be known by some of the non-Native students. What did they know?

It has taken many years to get out of that isolation from people, the hopelessness about life, the feelings of utter powerlessness which are still the cold winds that blow at my door. The depression was like the nightmares I had. I had the same one for years – I am laying across the train tracks, a train is coming, and I can't get off the tracks. I always woke up sweating and terrified. Later on, when I gave up alcohol and began taking care of myself, it was only my arm on the train tracks; then, in the last of those dreams, of actually being on the train instead of under it.

The dreams I have indicate to me where I need to work on myself; they are the memories my body has held for me until I can look at them and work on them. These memories have waited for the safety and support I need in my life to release the hurts I have endured.

It was first through the sweatlodge (Brown, 1988, p. 46) that I was given the permission I felt I needed to cry again. The elders said it is good to cry, "it is healing." This was all I needed to hear to release a flood of tears. The two summers I spent with a group of Anishnabe were a gift that I will always remember. It was at a time when I could not return home to my people, the ones that were closest to my heart; they were still hurting each other and using alcohol as their answer. I could not go back there for a long time, the place where I had been victimized.

Instead, I adopted a new family. Their acceptance, caring and respect brought tremendous healing to me. Their spirit of sharing contradicted the pattern of isolation, terror, and loneliness I had come to know and live by. In the sweatlodge, we shared our stories, our pain, and we cried together (Clarkson et al., 1992). In honor of each other, we cried with each other. I had never seen that anywhere else before in my life.

Another place of real healing in my life was from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (1986). In AA meetings, I found fellowship, and the sharing of stories and struggles was therapeutic for me emotionally, mentally and spiritually (O'Reilly, 1997). I discovered the AA program through my cousin who had also struggled with alcoholism. Her sobriety made me feel hopeful about myself, though it took me two years to actually sober up.

Without alcohol, I would experience severe panic attacks. I felt I could not breathe when the sun was setting; I would have to be outside or near an open window as the sky darkened. I could not see the beauty in the sunset. The sunset in my window brought fear, loneliness and dread for it reminded me that night was coming and with it danger to my very being. This was learned from my childhood and I had to unlearn it as an adult. Getting to meetings saved my life. Talking on the phone with other AA members helped me to manage all the feelings that came up for me on a daily basis.

Getting sober and staying sober has meant having to feel again, having to be honest with myself, and being willing to make amends where I have wronged people. After eleven years of sobriety, I still have a few amends left to make. I believe that, in good time, those opportunities will be presented to me; it is up to me to take a positive direction in all of them. Getting sober has also meant my freedom. Today, I am free of alcohol. There is no alcohol in my home today. My child has never seen me drink alcohol; this is a miracle in my eyes.

The third place of healing, that found it's way to me, was through drama. I had been recruited through my work to facilitate a group at "Adults Molested as Children." There, I got involved with the drama group. The group had already been performing for a year or so when I was added in as the "distress recording," the voice we survivors hear in our minds long after surviving the incidents of abuse. My voice, at that time, was so soft and faint that, on stage, it was not loud enough to be heard. This was my struggle in sticking with the play.

With much encouragement from the group and persistent coaching from our "director," my voice found its way out of me and with it came my power. What transformed me was being able to voice my pain out loud and, more than that, I was able to go back and "confront" the abuser while the audience looked on as if coming back there with me.

Wethered (1973) talks about the use of drama in therapy, which is what the play was for me – therapy and healing:

> In such portrayal, excess emotion may be drawn off in the actual playing, or, by being able to sink the personality in the part, a person may contact other people or find a new freedom. Inner problems may be eased temporarily by absorption in the drama, and so may perhaps be seen more objectively by the participant, relieved of the emotional pressure for the time being (p. 61).

Out of this participation in a play about women who survived childhood sexual abuse came a spring of creativity. I discovered, within myself, the ability to write in such a way that I could reach people, including my own siblings. One of my brothers told me several times how deeply touched he was by one poem in particular which I had written; this was very validating for me. The poem had helped him to think about his own alcoholism and how it was affecting his family.

Recovering my voice happened through poetry, which was another healing result of my role in the play. Poetry therapy is talked about by Schattner and Courtney (1981) as the "expression and release of emotion through poetry and other forms of creative writing in order to attain greater insight and understanding of the self" (p. 222).

The most recent place of healing for me and what I have come to use in my life and in my work is Co-counselling or Re-evaluation Counselling (Jackins, 1994). Here, I have experienced the most profound and lasting changes in my life. It has been a very empowering tool for me as a Native woman. My thinking, feeling, doing has shifted completely from being a victim to being in charge of my life and my home. What has held me to this process is the way it parallels Native thought and Native ceremony. The policy of equal time-equal power, that no one person is more powerful or more valuable than another person, has held true in all my experiences with Co-counselling. This one idea, and the consistent practice of it, has held the greatest contradiction to the ways that I have been victimized.

It has provided a place of safety to heal my old wounds by using the discharge, or releasing of emotions, as a process of healing. The theory and process of Co-counselling parallels very closely with Native thought regarding the perception of crying as healing, and the belief in our inherent goodness as humans. What first attracted me to Co-counselling was the amazing variety of people coming together; people from various cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds, working on their own liberation but doing it together.

It is by crying that I am able to heal from my past hurts. Not by crying alone, in isolation, but with others who are respectful of me and who give me their watchful attention. Today, my co-counsellors and I take turns listening to each other releasing our pain. When we come together, it is with deep caring and appreciation for each other's brilliance, goodness and as celebration of our survival.

As a counsellor, I have worked with people who also survived by learning not to cry. Their voices are flat, lifeless, without expression, while they tell of the horrific things that happened to them. It may take them a long time to get to the tears. Sometimes, they are ready to cry when I meet them for the first time; they are merely waiting for the right opportunity, a listener who will actually listen to them cry. Sometimes, then, when I use the words that reflect the truth about them, it only takes a few words, "You are a good person, you have always been a good person," for their tears to begin flowing.

In this way, I continue to heal from my past; it is ongoing and a process that will be a part of my life as a counsellor and as a person. My personal search for help and healing has brought me to want to be a listener for others. Now, I also want to know how other Native adults survived their childhood trauma – what was their journey like? Where did they go for help? What was useful to them and what was not useful?

Counselling and Healing: Two Roads

Several key experiences as a student, sojourner, and counsellor have forced me to look at the differences that exist between two worlds – the Western and Indigenous ways of counselling and healing. In developing my skills as a counsellor, and as a Native counsellor, I have been evaluating what is out there, in this urban setting, that Native people can use to heal themselves.

During my six-week Counselling practicum, I had the opportunity to observe and work with the adolescents who had been placed in a psychiatric hospital. The ward was named Behavior Therapy. What I notice was that, at any given time, half or more of the patients were of Native heritage. What I also noticed, and became concerned with, was the heavy and consistent reliance on medication, drugs, for the purposes of alleviating or suppressing the symptoms that the youth presented. At the treatment team meetings, the very first word uttered by the officiating psychiatrist as to what could be done to 'help' the youth was the amount, in milligrams, of a particular drug, and whether to increase or decrease it according to the severity of symptoms or side-effects of medication being presented by that child.

The labels that were put on them, such as "schizophrenia," seemed to sum them up into a category from which they were never expected to move, and so their uniqueness as a person became submerged within a labelling of illness to the doctors, nurses, social worker, psychologist, and occupational therapist. The hope for them to move through their struggles seemed non-existent; it was not something held out for them by the staff. There seemed to be an unspoken resignation on the ward that said to the patients and their parents: "Don't hope to heal from schizophrenia, just find ways to manage it for the rest of your life."

The place for communication or expression was a therapy group called "express yourself," where it was hoped the youth would talk about their worries and get clarification and support from each other. When any of them tried to express their feelings, particularly the suppressed anger, they were removed from the group. There was no method for allowing one to express his/her emotions in a safe and thoughtful way. They were limited to very narrow ways of expressing themselves in the group, where their behavior came under attack and they were put in a time-out chair. If their "inappropriate" or undesirable behavior progressed or continued, they were locked in a seclusion room while they expressed their anger with no one close by to listen to them.

This seemed unfair and inhumane to me; at least, it seemed an ineffective way of healing, as I understand healing. It seemed unfair to provide a place where the patients are told they can express themselves, yet are not told exactly what is allowed or not allowed at the start. They could be told that this is a place where you can talk about your feelings, but if you need to show your feelings, you can get a session with your nurse or worker. When they did attempt to show themselves, in the only ways they knew how, their ways were considered inappropriate by the behaviorist approach therapist, and they were reprimanded and subdued even further, and controlled by the use of drugs and isolation. There is a difference between saying how you feel and actually releasing the rage.

This experience reminded me of a friend I came to know who was a patient in the adult psychiatric ward and who had been there for many years. As a volunteer, I would visit with her or take her out for a drive if she wanted. One day, I went to see her and she asked if we could go outside to the skating rink; she wanted to be able to cry, and told me if she got upset on the ward, it would mean isolation and medication. She wanted freedom to cry about something that was distressful to her and to have someone listen to her cry.

This Western way of "being helped" was completely opposite to what I participated in at a Native workshop organized by Four Worlds Development (Bopp & Bopp, 1997) where there were a variety of counselling and healing tools offered to the participants. I attended one session where people lined up into the night to do "anger work." Because I was there as a support to the facilitator and was familiar and comfortable with this kind of counselling, I was one of the counsellors that night. The two of us worked into the late hours listening to people's rage.

The participants wanted the freedom to scream and cry and sob as loud as they could with caring attention. This involved laying on the floor on a mat, which was actually all our jackets laid out for them, while being held down by six to eight people as a way of providing something to push on with their whole body. Often, when we have a lot of anger in us, we try not to let it out for the fear of hurting someone or ourselves. This method offered the safety people needed to really rage and grieve.

In this way, they got to go back and fight for themselves at the time and place where they gave up fighting, where they lost their power. Every one of them went back to when they were sexually abused. They each used this opportunity to go back and rescue their child within (Whitfield, 1987). It was evident that this experience was useful to them as they finished their sessions and encouraged others to try it.

To be able to scream and cry with safety for however long they needed just to get the feelings of rage, hopelessness, and powerlessness out, with one main listener giving you their complete respect and attention was empowering to all of us that night. Others who waited for their turn stayed together, holding each other, listening to the rage pour out of people with words, screams and crying. Everyone was thoughtful of each other, taking care of each other, all recognizing the importance of the work being done by each person and all validating the innocence and goodness of each one. This went on late into the night and again the next day.

When people were through with their sessions, they were welcomed back into the present with hugs, smiles and encouragement. They were able to go back to the place where they had been victimized and with the support of others and good attention from the counsellors, they fought for themselves, they fought for their power. For many of them, it was the beginning of their walk into freedom from their past hurts; for others, it was another milestone on their long journey of healing.

These experiences made me think of how different Western mental health often is from Indigenous healing. Though there are many therapies in Western counselling, it should be noted that the mental health services that most people have access to is dominated by a pharmaceutical treatment. "The bureaucratic style predominates in mental hospitals, as well as in prisons, schools, and community mental health centers, where the aim is to isolate deviants and compel them to behave properly" (Jaffe, 1975, p. 48).

There are many differences that exist today in the Western and Indigenous healing practices. This comparison began for me when I met the Native children on the psychiatric ward and wondered if any of them had ever had the opportunity to go to a sweatlodge ceremony. When I asked the psychiatrist, he said they tried staying in touch with an elder years ago, but he did not know what was going on with that any longer. Instantly, I was concerned with this non-Aboriginal staff not knowing very much about Native culture. I wondered how they could know, or presume to know, what was useful for the Native patients on the ward.

I also observed the assessment process in the child and adolescent ward; it consisted of a team of professionals – a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, teacher, occupational therapist, and a psychiatric nurse – who all looked at the child's behavior and symptoms. Each worked in isolation in their testing of the patients, typically along the lines of behavior, affect, sensation, imagery, cognition, interpersonal relationships and drugs/biology as has been outlined in Lazarus' BASIC I.D. (Corey, 1996, p. 229). The team would come together with their separate diagnoses for team assessment meetings and a plan was put together for the treatment of the individual children.

The view of the patient was divided up into pieces of behavior, assessed in isolation by the practitioners, then put together again like a puzzle. Diagnosis took place for the first week that the child was in the hospital. For the time being, most of the patients' symptoms were treated with medication. Isolation was used to manage or correct his/her negative behavior. The actual counselling or therapy took place while the child was on the medication. I asked myself – how can the child get to his/her feelings while sedated? The relationship of trust between patient and doctor is hindered by the goal of controlling and shaping behavior. This puts up a barrier to the process of releasing emotions with "care and respect" for the individual's struggle. In this sense, the patient is not honored, but only conditioned.

I knew that these children were really good people who had been hurt in some way. I had learned from Native elders that we are all born into the world as good people (Hart, 1997). As humans, we are born in harmony with the universe. It is what happens to us in life that threatens this balance.

Because of this, I was saddened that the hospital had not found a more healing way, a more human way, of responding to the children, especially the Native children. The focus was on correcting behavior, rather than restoring inner balance and empowerment. I believed, at that point, that greater harm was being done to these young people. I could not perceive their treatment as therapeutic, as it did not actually liberate them the way the sweatlodge ceremonies had helped me.

As a result, I became more interested in what the child was actually trying to say to the adults in their environment – parents, teachers, counsellors, and doctors. I wanted to know more about their original hurts, their early trauma, and whether they had ever been given the opportunity to give it a voice in order to release it, or had they always been medicated and forced to 'control' or suppress their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

What I often see is that most Native people who relocate to urban centres turn to Western counselling or self-help programs initially and use the opportunity to tell their story a few times over. After a while, they find they want more from counselling, possibly something more spiritual, a connection to other humans and maybe to their own people if they are seeing a non-Native counsellor, which is often the case. This is when they return to their own traditional teachings and ceremonies reclaiming what they had lost in their assimilation in Residential Schools and, then, depending on their experience of re-discovery, they will either stay with it or go away to find other ways of healing. Some of them turn to Christian beliefs and the church, or some will use a mixture of all three ways as a means of building support for themselves in their healing from childhood trauma.

Further research will help us to identify methods of healing and counselling that are appropriate for Aboriginal communities.

An Overview of Research on Counselling and Healing

Because of my exposure to the mental health system, as a Native woman counsellor, my interest in the research of healing journeys is based upon the recognition of the need for effective healing strategies for Native people. My concern is that Native clients may not be receiving the healing that is appropriate for them, culturally and spiritually, in the mainstream mental health services. "This concern warrants an examination of the effectiveness of the Western mental health services" (York, 1990 as cited in McCormick, 1995). Therefore, this literature search will be focused upon a critique of current Western mental health processes in the light of Aboriginal cultural realities.

Healing

Clarkson et al. (1992), in a report of the International Institute for Sustainable Development, offer a simple, yet conclusive, definition of healing:

> Their minds must be healed from the ravages of centuries of oppression. Their bodies must be reclaimed from alcohol and abuse, both sexual and physical. Their spirits must be reclaimed, the spirit of their ancestors not the spirit of Christianity or any other doctrine." Adding to that, an alternative to the present Western mental health services. "We have found where psychoanalysis, conventional therapy, and other means of dealing with peoples' problems, have failed, there is one way that has consistently given results and that has changed peoples' lives profoundly, giving them a renewed sense of self, a stronger foundation to face the world and a vision for the future. This

> way entails the reclamation of their understanding of themselves as Indigenous people and their role on this planet (p. 47).

The process of healing as outlined by Clarkson et al. (1992) *begins with an understanding of the colonial relationship and the impact it has had on Indigenous people.* This process is described as the "*historical reconstruction from an Indigenous perspective.*" Adding that "*we must do this because the mainstream and its methods have failed us consistently in all aspects of our lives*" (p. 46).

The report also stated strongly and clearly that "*the healing process for Indigenous people must be facilitated by Indigenous people using the healing methods that are specific to their culture*" (p. 47).

> Too often, non-Indigenous groups are funded to deliver a range of social support services to Indigenous people on the basis that they are a disadvantaged group. Not only does this result in culturally inappropriate services, but the underlying dependency dynamic shaping the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the dominant society is not altered. Notwithstanding that many non-Indigenous people benefit from Indigenous poverty and oppression, and that significant economic benefits would be realized through Indigenous control of the social service delivery system, appreciable change will not occur until Indigenous peoples are personally responsible for, and in control of, their own healing (p. 76).

Finally, the report rejects the "client" relationship in helping services, suggesting that it must be eliminated if real healing is to occur:

> The professionalization of helping services is a barrier to healing because the relationship is fundamentally unequal. Often, people who need assistance dealing with life stresses are not prepared to use existing services because the structure of services requires them to adopt a subordinate position relative to the helper. Real healing occurs in an environment of equality where, no matter how serious someone's problem, he/she still has something to offer someone else. Equality in helping relationships means recognizing that no-one is without life stresses and no-one is without personal resources that are valuable to others. Additionally, the professionalization of Indigenous social services mitigates against a role for traditional methods and healers, since such services tend to adopt conventional mainstream practices (p. 76).

Another Aboriginal definition of healing and healthy communities, found in one study by Buller (1994), emphasizes *"people getting involved in the community; trust, caring and sharing; positive parenting, good teachings; openness, communication; not being ashamed; and taking responsibility, having clear expectations.*" The study outlines three aspects of the healing process: "*moving from within,*" it starts with the individual and expands into the family and finally to the community; "*balance and wholeness, mind, body, soul connection, all are equal;*" and "*moving from programs to* *process,"* noting that "*programs imported from outside the community, and not at the very least adapted to the realities of that community, were at risk of failing.*" This third aspect suggested strongly that *"the most effective approach of all is one of community development from within."*

One chapter is devoted to community healing, including victims and offenders. The recognition that justice should include healing points out a valid viewpoint of community restoration versus the mainstream focus of punishment and "correction." One participant speaks to this very poignantly:

> Victims and offenders should definitely be brought into the healing process. I am a victim and an offender and, as a youth, it is kinda scary to have to talk about what happened to me as a child. I was afraid to tell because I did not want them (the authorities) to hurt my mommy. As I got older, I began to hurt other people like she did me, and recently I realized what I was doing (p. 45).

Another participant agrees with this viewpoint and talks about the ineffectiveness of prisons that do not provide healing for offenders.

> When I was in jail and came out, it was OK for a few minutes; things seemed normal, but then it passed and I felt out of it, not a part of it. So, I turned back to drinking. One of the things I didn't deal with was my anger, and now as I go through this program, I am able to learn and to practice new ways to express it (p. 47).

McCormick (1995) outlines "*healing outcomes*" in his study "The Facilitation of Healing for the First Nations People of British Columbia." In it, emphasis is placed on "*empowerment, cleansing, balance, discipline and belonging"* as an effective healing program. Analyzed narrative accounts revealed five main themes:

> A broad spectrum of healing resources are available to First Nations people; First Nations people have a different way of seeing the world that has to be understood before effective counselling services can be provided; First Nations people expect that whatever is healing should help them to attain and/or maintain balance; self-transcendence followed by connectedness is a common route to healing for First Nations people; and First Nations people are seen to act as agents of their own healing (p. 251).

One category of healing that stands out in a unique way is cleansing – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Cleansing refers to *eliminating or getting rid of bad energy, spirits, or emotions* and can include outcomes such as *elimination, purging, relieving pressure, and releasing emotions.* It is the expression of emotion such as pain, anger, or fear that often leads to cleansing. The study states that the belief in the healing power of cleansing is prevalent in First Nations people and not so prominent in Western approaches to healing. Because much of the practice of cleansing is expressed in a symbolic way, it may not be visible or understood by non-Native people.

Another healing outcome is the participation in *ceremony* such as the sweatlodge ritual which is *considered a place of cleansing or rebirthing*. Other healing outcomes were listed as empowerment, establishing social connection, establishing a spiritual connection, establishing a connection with nature, anchoring oneself in tradition, exercise, involvement in challenging activities, expressing oneself, obtaining help/support from others, self care, helping others, gaining an understanding of the problem, and learning from a role model.

Counselling

Wetsit (1999) writes, "counselling had its origin in education and normative developmental work with people, whereas psychology and psychiatry are oriented more toward the diagnosis and treatment of pathology." In regards to American Indian cultures, she states:

> Counselling has always played an important role. For example, traditional Native healers have strived to meet the counselling needs of the community and individual. These traditional activities may not be recognized by European American observers as counselling due to differences in approach and process; yet, the intent of providing help to individuals, families, or groups is the same. Carolyn Attneave points out that, even today, the presence and responsibilities of traditional healers remain hidden to non-Native counsellors. She attributes this hidden existence to the long history of persecution and superstition of European American society. However, counselling persists within Native cultures (p. 180).

About cross-cultural counselling, she recognizes that cultural awareness has increased by professionals since the 1970s, including the realization that expectations for counsellor and client roles have been influenced almost exclusively by Western European models and worldviews.

> While these models have proven effective in working with members of European American society, they have been less effective with other ethnicities. Counsellors need to remember that American Indians and other ethnic minorities are socialized to interpret their experiences in the world much differently than the majority culture (p. 183).

Hope

Fournier and Crey (1997) talk about the abduction of First nations children and the restoration of Aboriginal communities:

> Hodgson says the success of the Native sobriety movement that, since 1969, has swept through North American reserves and urban communities "*has been tremendously empowering. It's brought us out of our midnight of residential*

> *schools, alcoholism, family breakdown, and sexual abuse, and into the daylight.*" The Carrier woman is convinced the Aboriginal community has taken the crucial first steps toward vanquishing sexual abuse. "*For years, we tried to close up and hide this issue; now, we are choosing the opposite road, to open it up and develop treatment approaches. We can become leaders in the treatment of sexual abuse,*" says Hodgson, "*just as we did in achieving sobriety, against what people said were incredible odds*" (p. 137).

From this brief look at the literature on Native healing and counselling, it can be said that there is hope for Native people. There is hope that we can heal ourselves and we can end the alcoholism, violence, and abuse in our communities, in our lives, and in our families. We do not have to rely on the Western approaches or models for our wellness. In fact, it can be said that we have much to offer Western society and the world.

Giokas' (1992) article in the report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Justice Issues (1993) rings out what is cause for celebration:

> A global human rights revolution is going on that has assisted Aboriginal peoples worldwide in their drive for new power sharing arrangements in the states in which they are found. Since 1982, and the renewed emphasis on rights under the Constitution, it seems inevitable that a new relationship based on new political and constitutional rules that will recognize the right of Aboriginal peoples in Canada to self-government is just around the corner (p. 189).

This change will have tremendous impact on the way healing/counselling is to take shape in the new millennium, possibly for all peoples, but certainly for Native people. Therefore, it is critical that we begin to understand what Native people need and want in mental health services and in their re-introduction to the traditional Indigenous ways of healing.

According to Buller (1994), Aboriginal people do not want "piece-meal programs, but rather a process for holistic development; the project also served to reinforce that Aboriginal communities are excited by the opportunity and are willing to share their expertise and knowledge about healing as it relates to the development of healthy communities across Canada. Although there may be cultural differences, these differences need not become barriers to communication between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities or the sharing of expertise across cultural lines" (p. 85).

In fact, further research dissemination of Aboriginal healing and counselling approaches will likely be richly helpful for all cultural groups. There appears to be special value in making a distinction between "talking about" a problem versus actually releasing the pain toward healing.

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A Sense of Place: Aboriginal Research as Ritual Practice

Carolyn Kenny

Today, I understand that education is one key in a very small set of keys which will unlock the doors of possibility and choice for our people, for our children. I could have made this statement yesterday, or the day before, or last year, or the year before, or many years before. But, today, I have a new and deeper feeling about the concept of education and what it can mean for us. This new feeling is the result of my reflection on my research over the last two years in some of our Aboriginal communities.

Knowledge is one of the core values for us. And sometimes, this translates into education in the modern world. My own mother, a Choctaw, emphasized the importance of education. From an early age, I heard the word 'education.' She always said, "Education is one thing that no one can take away from you. Get as much as you can." And I did. I went all the way. I got a Ph.D.

Now, I work for a large university. Part of my work is research in our Aboriginal communities. As a Native researcher, I've had many conversations with colleagues about doing research. I've also had my own experiences doing research in our Aboriginal communities and, in conjunction with this research, have heard a lot of stories about education and research. In this article, I want to explore some of the dilemmas of doing Aboriginal research and offer some ideas and approaches which have helped me to diminish conflicts in my own work.

In our Native world, education is valued. But education, for some, can represent the history of colonization and the association of education with colonizing institutions. Education can be perceived and felt as representing government, church, institutions which are not grounded in Native values. Hegemony is a powerful concept. And it's true. The academie is full of hegemony. By hegemony, I mean that the systems, such as the academie and all it represents, are embedded with the values and beliefs of the people who created them. And these people were not Native. Therefore, the universities were not created on a foundation of Aboriginal values, not at all.

There is a difference between education and knowledge. And though many elders and leaders, like my mother, emphasize the importance of education, it is often perceived as a way to get ahead in the modern world, and even a way to get ahead in the "white" world. The status of the degree counts. And the knowledge counts, too. But, often, getting an education is perceived as a betrayal.

Those of us who move ahead into the educational and academic fields are on the horns of a dilemma. We want to grow, to know, to share our learning in our communities, to develop ourselves in the modern world. Yet, far too often, getting the education and the degrees puts us in a position of isolation and alienation among our own people.

For Native men and women who go on to higher education, and attempt to bring the methods they learn in the university back into our communities, there are often painful encounters associated with this dilemma. Many have left their communities with the idea of learning about the modern ways in the city, at the university, and return to their communities with the gifts of knowledge from the academie, only to be shunned by the leadership as "outsiders" among their own people. This can be devastating when one has taken a basic position of "caring" - of improving oneself with the hopes of sharing our new knowledge and skills with folks back home.

Another reason that Aboriginal research is tough is the fight with the university itself. The "publish or perish" principle is very different from the guidelines of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, which state that the primary purpose of the research must be the benefit of the research to the people being studied. This discrepancy in approaches puts the Aboriginal researcher in the position of trying to negotiate with the university over things such as partnership agreements, consent forms, copyright policies. The university is in a position of privilege and, most often, claims the territory of the findings on behalf of scholarly publications such as texts and journals, which are inaccessible to the people who are being studied. In order to secure a place in the academie, Aboriginal scholars need to obtain tenure. And tenure is contingent upon the production of texts for just such publications.

Funding agencies also can become a deterrent to good Aboriginal research. The research questions, research methodologies, and methods of documentation are sometimes not in accord with Aboriginal needs, values or beliefs. And the requirements of the funders sometimes do not give Aboriginal researchers the freedom to act on what they perceive to be the needs of the communities in a way which reflects our world view. The agenda of the funder drives the way the research is done and, subsequently, the results of studies. Often funders do not offer Aboriginal researchers an opportunity to exercise their creativity. Creativity is an important aspect of good Aboriginal research.

For me, the most difficult aspect of Aboriginal research is the weight of the history of practices of previous researchers. There are issues of appropriation, misrepresentation, and even abuse. When Aboriginal scholars enter communities to do research, they bear the weight of this unfortunate history. People have a hard time believing, even under the best of circumstances, that it could be different. Often, Aboriginal researchers are perceived as guilty until proven innocent. Often, they must sit patiently and listen to the concerns, biases and even prejudice toward research and education itself, before work can begin. And, sometimes, it doesn't begin. Sometimes, leaders in the communities have put a moratorium on the conducting of any research at all. There is a devastating irony in this. In the final analysis, lack of research in our communities, or resistance to research, only diminishes our capacity to acquire funding for programs, to improve the quality of our lives, and to begin to establish our own agenda and procedures in the research.

When we manage to accomplish what we feel is good Aboriginal research, there's nothing like it. We soar. And though I have started this article keeping the dilemmas in mind, I have also had many productive and enriching experiences doing Aboriginal research in the last two years. The highlights of these research experiences have been my relationships with community liaisons, making new friends across the country, being privileged to listen and be a witness to the stories of our people, and experiencing the gratification of successful work which can help to make a difference in our communities. My research has been to conduct individual and group interviews. And I feel the importance of sitting quietly and listening. I also value the skills I have developed as an interviewer, the challenge of formulating the right questions which go deeper and deeper into knowing. And I am very grateful for these experiences.

In one project, "North American Indian, Metis and Inuit Women Speak About Culture, Education and Work," I served as the project manager. Our team of three researchers conducted individual and group interviews at eight sites across Canada. We wanted to learn about barriers, which kept Aboriginal women from realizing their hopes and dreams for education and work. We often heard stories about women who felt they had to sacrifice their education in order to keep their culture. It was very sad that they could not have both.

My purpose in writing this paper is to share some ideas about how we might approach Aboriginal research in a way which reflects our cultural values and practices.

A Sense of Place

"Know who you are." We often hear this phrase from our elders. Our strength is in a solid belief in our identity and, therefore, a confidence to move ahead with a sure step. Knowing who you are means knowing where you come from and knowing who your people are.

Over the last thirty years, my journey in the academie has been a burning desire to understand. I want to understand the issues associated with my bi-cultural identity. My mother is Native and my father is Ukranian. As a child, I often spent a great deal of time in the forest staying very close to pine needles and trickling brooks. I composed songs and listened to a lot of birds. Beauty was very important to me. Staying close to Mother Earth with my senses was very important to me. Subsequently, I became a music and creative arts therapist. One of the areas of my study has been aesthetics. I want to know about the importance of beauty and arts expression. How do our experiences in the arts help us to survive and thrive? One of my research projects has been to study the role of the arts in the revitalization of Aboriginal societies. I know that the arts can offer opportunities for growth and change on an experiential level because, after thirty years, I have had many experiences, personally and professionally, with the arts, enough to know deep in my heart about their importance. However, that isn't enough. In order to share with others, I need to develop concepts, ideas, language. I need to be involved in discursive practices with research participants, colleagues and friends.

As Aboriginal scholars move into higher education and assume positions in the academie, how do we integrate the academie into our identity, into "who we are?" How do we walk with a sure foot in the halls of the university? Though I really like the idea of the university, the possibilities which open up when we are associated with the universities, I struggle to stay whole, to keep my identity intact, to feel that I "belong." The fundamental values of the university seem so different than mine, most of the time – both my beliefs as a Native person, and as an individual.

I believe that our search for a "sense of place" is fundamental to our experience as human beings. And as Aboriginal people, we rely on a sense of place, our connection to the land to know home, to belong. For the Aboriginal scholar and researcher, finding this sense of place is not easy. But I do want to tell you about a day when I had that feeling. I found my sense of place for a short time. All my worlds came together at the same time.

One day, I had completed my draft of our report, "North American Indian, Metis and Inuit Women Speak about Culture, Education and Work." As the project manager, I had put together the draft report and had written many of the chapters. Often, I got up at 2:30 in the morning to begin my work, when things were quiet and I was clear-headed.

On this day, I was so happy to be putting the work in the mail - to send it to the participants for their feedback. I felt that I had done a good job. And, in my heart, I felt that I belonged. I was happy to be driving to the university that day. The usual internal and external conflicts which permeate my days on campus, being the only tenure-track Aboriginal scholar in a major university, disappeared. I had a feeling of contentment. As a worker, I was fulfilled. Having a position at the university had given me an opportunity to "be a researcher," and working in Aboriginal communities across the nation had given me an opportunity to feel that I could be with other Aboriginal people and actually make some kind of contribution which would help to improve our lives as Aboriginal peoples.

For awhile, I felt whole, living in all my worlds together, not split off or fragmented. It all made sense because I had a sense of place. I could belong in different worlds at the same time, and I had been able to live in these different worlds without having to compromise either one.

On this day, I was happy to be going to my place of work. I tried to drive slowly, but my imagination soared. I could see myself walking down the halls of my university with sure and solid feet. I knew it would be a good day because I knew I belonged. The university was my place. But, also, the Aboriginal communities were my place. I could retain my identity and still work in an institution, which seems too alien to me so much of the time.

Oh, you know, we manage. I know I struggle. In fact, most often, I see the university and the research process as a site of struggle. How do we maintain and even nurture a sense of place, a feeling of belonging on a battleground? As Aboriginal scholars, we can put on the face, the dress. We can quickly learn the code of conduct of a university professor and researcher. But only on this day did I realize how much I give up on these other days, when I am a shadow of who I could be. What would it be like to have everyday a day like this? What would it be like to be able to walk down those halls everyday and feel that sense of place, feel that I really belonged here in the university? Well, that's a little extreme. But, it is an important question. What could we accomplish if we felt, more often, the wholeness of ourselves without having to make those difficult choices, or learn those foreign ways of behaviour? Then, our creativity and our productivity could really soar.

Nevertheless, I am grateful for those moments of wholeness. I'm trying to keep the image, the feeling of walking down those halls on that day, alive and well within me.

Aboriginal Research

In contemporary times, there is an oppressive essentialism, which attempts to standardize our lives for the sake of efficiency. As our worlds become more and more complex, this attitude of fundamentalism grows. Complexity is too tough. Perhaps the most offensive manifestation of this attitude in our society shows up when Aboriginal peoples are treated as "special interest groups." The greatest philosophers from any culture tell us that, yes, there are certainly human essentials – things we have in common across cultures, across lands. But in the final analysis, the things we have in common compose a small list. It is through our differences that we grow and change. Aboriginal peoples have something unique to contribute. There is something essentially "different" about us – different from peoples who originate in Western Europe. There are also many differences between our own peoples. We are not all the same.

Yet, when we use a term like "Aboriginal research," we have to define it, to find out what it means within the context of our work. "Aboriginal" does describe a unique approach to research.

What is Aboriginal research anyway? Is it the study of Aboriginal peoples by Native and non-Native scholars? Is it Aboriginal peoples studying Aboriginal peoples? Is it any research done by an Aboriginal person?

For me, Aboriginal research is research which reflects the values and beliefs of our peoples. Hopefully, when Aboriginal researchers do research, they will keep their thinking broad in terms of methods and approaches, and will, at the same time, be able to construct and conduct their research in a way which is in accordance with their worldviews.

I think of my research in music therapy as Aboriginal research, not so much because I am an Aboriginal person, but because the methods I used, the way I conducted my research, the theory I have constructed, all reflect my Native worldview, the one given to me by my mother.

If I see non-Aboriginal people conducting their research in a way which embodies the core values and beliefs which I have come to know as "Aboriginal," the ones which my mother taught me or the ones which I have learned from others I respect, they, too, are doing Aboriginal research, in a sense. This attitude might not conform to the principles of identity politics. And I don't really understand it myself. But, I feel it. Maybe the non-Aboriginal person has been influenced in some way by Aboriginal colleagues. Maybe they, too, come from a culture which has similar values to ours. Or maybe they have landed on this approach to research through their own study or through their intuitive sensibilities. No matter how they discovered it, I would recognize it as Aboriginal research and I would feel "related" to this person, as a colleague, as a human being.

Ritual Practice

In our traditional societies, ritual was the functional representation of myth. And still today, in many tribal societies, which have had little contact, this close relationship between ritual and myth remains. Myths are sacred stories, exemplary stories which guide our path, our growth. Rituals are the spaces in which myths are expressed. Ritual spaces are safe and secure, constant enough to hold conflict and dissonance.

Through the enactment of rituals, we have been able to keep our sacred stories, to keep remembering "who we are." Aboriginal researchers are part of these stories too. We have many stories, even if our own people have been almost destroyed, even if we don't know our Aboriginal languages, even if we sometimes feel lost. The sacred stories are still part of our collective memory. Maybe we have a kind of amnesia from time to time. How can we access this collective memory and allow it to inform the diverse aspects of our lives, including the research process?

Ritual practice implies a kind of "right form," a proper way to do things. Rituals are repeatable forms which make space for innovation. Rituals were also used to keep things in order and provide safety for the people. When things are repeated over and over again, especially in our tribal rituals which follow the patterns of Mother Earth, we come to understand that things are in order, even though they sometimes seem chaotic and we sometimes do not understand. When we have a sense of order and coherence, we feel safe and we can consider "change."

Let's consider applying the concept of ritual to our research practice. We have a set of procedures for research and we develop our skills. We use these skills over and over. If we develop mastery over the procedures, we are able to help with positive changes in our communities. Through practice, we make them our own. They become a part of our identity and are influenced by the other aspects of our collective and individual identities.

There are stages in a ritual practice. The first stage is preparation. Certainly, "knowing who I am" is the first part of my preparation. This means knowing where I come from, appreciating all of my ancestors, and knowing my strengths and limitations as a person. For the Aboriginal scholar, we might think of the many years we have spent in the university getting our education as a preparation. The preparation is also the wisdom handed down to us from elders and family members about the good way to do things. In a research study, we prepare ourselves through considering the best approach to our research. Cleansing is also part of preparation. When sweat lodges are available, some researchers are able to participate in the cleansing and purification available in the lodge. I burn sweatgrass and sage. I also do a type of meditation, attempting to purge any preconceived notions I have about the various elements of my research. In phenomenological research, I need to have "suspended judgement." And I do a lot of phenomenological research, looking at the direct experience of my participants.

The next stage of ritual practice is engagement or enactment. If I have done a good preparation, my focus is clear. My consciousness is able to bear witness to the experience of my participants, to learn from them, to accurately record their stories, to honour them. With each interview, I become better at being related to my interviewee. This is an inter-subjective space in the research process. I attempt to identify with my participants. I consume their stories wholeheartedly with a good listening ear, with empathy, with as much understanding as I am able. If I have fully integrated my identity as a scholar, as a good researcher, I can participate in their stories and, at the same time, begin to envision the "innovative spaces" which are possible worlds. These innovative spaces are sensed first in the interviews themselves. But they come into my imagination as specific solutions in the analyzing of my data. I discern themes. I do not "over interpret" the data, as has been the case in much previous research in our communities. I am not the center of the research. The participants are the center. And their words, their stories, must remain central to the research telling, the research findings. In this way, the power remains with the people and it can grow. When my findings are published and they see their own words more than mine, they feel powerful and they feel in control of their spaces, their lives.

My skill as a researcher is apparent in my ability to express and suggest innovation and change from the collection of stories and words. Because of the volume of data, I must fly high to see the big picture. If I have done my research in a good way, I can see very clearly. When I teach research methods to my students at the university, I use Raven to help me describe the research process and the research experience. Raven flies. He surveys the land. He watches all of the berries. If he is using all of his ravenly skills, he is discerning. He knows which berries to pick and he knows how to organize them and categorize them into the right baskets. When I study transcripts of interviews, I feel a bit like Raven might feel. I wait for the words of the participants to jump out to me from the page. I survey the land over and over again. I read the transcripts many times until I have a referential totality, a sense of the whole set of transcripts, all of the stories and words of the participants.

Another stage of ritual practice is validation. Has the enactment been recognized and appreciated by others? Validation occurs through the feedback of advisors and participants. Do they recognize the report I've created? Have I succeeded in honouring their experiences, describing their situations, reporting their words? Do they have a good feeling from reading my report? Do they feel seen and heard in a good way? Do they agree with the conclusions I've drawn? Do they think this work can be used to benefit their communities and themselves as individuals?

My advisors, who are usually elders, also give me feedback about how I have performed as an individual. Have I used all of the talents and skills the Creator has given me? Have I grown through this experience? They help me to check my path, to learn from my experience so that I can keep progressing, keep learning.

The last stage of the ritual practice is transformation and renewal. If the research findings are used wisely, positive change will come to the participants. Those "innovative spaces" will be explored. Change will occur and renewal will come. In my research, I listen to stories. Stories are not static. They are dynamic. Each time a story is told, there are changes in the body of the story. A story is told in a different way depending on who the listener is. Stories change over time based on the stages of development of the people telling the story. As they grow, they see things differently. Each time a story is told, there is new hope for positive change for our people. In this "newness," we can find "renewal." And we need it. We need it for ourselves and for our children.

Conclusion

Today, I understand that education is one key in a very small set of keys which will unlock the doors of possibility and choice for our people, for our children. And today is a new day. After reflecting on my Aboriginal research, I have deepened, once again, my understanding about the importance of this key.

Aboriginal research is an opportunity for us to create innovation and change for our people. If we develop an approach to research which is unique and reflects our values and beliefs, we will be reflecting the spirit of our ancestors, the spirit of our people who are alive today, and the spirit of our Aboriginal children who are yet to be born.

Through coming to the academie, we have created the opportunity for universities to be sites of struggle. I struggle. I struggle everyday to feel that I belong. But we can belong, and we must belong. The identity of an Aboriginal university professor who conducts research can, in itself, be perceived as an innovative space, and one which can be integrated and incorporated into our identity as Aboriginal people, just as so many other aspects of the non-Aboriginal world have been adapted and modified to benefit our people.

But this type of adaptation and integration must include a serious reflection on how we adapt, how we approach our research tasks. If we merely learn the "tools of the trade" for research and put them onto our people, we will be performing another type of colonization and participating in a hegemonic proliferation. And we will not be exercising our uniqueness and creativity as a people.

In my interviews with many Aboriginal people in the last two years, my heart has been deeply touched by people who are experiencing a fear and a sorrow that we will lose our uniqueness and, therefore, lose "who we are." I hear this fear expressed by elders, by teachers, by leaders, and, unfortunately, by children themselves.

As Aboriginal researchers, we can know who we are. We can make the academie our place. We can feel safe enough, through ritual practice, not only to survive the university, but to thrive and to be creative in our expressions. Sometimes, this journey of making safe places for elaborate growth is done together, and sometimes it is done alone.

Spirit is our source. It is through spirit that we can see the vision of the interconnectedness of all things and receive the strength to bring that vision into our lives as Aboriginal peoples, as scholars in the university. Now we have enough Aboriginal scholars within the academie to be prepared. Of course, each of us has contributed in different degrees. But, as a group, we can imagine that we have completed the state of preparation and that we are ready to move on to the next stage of engagement and enactment with our full natures. In this way, we can make the universities our own places, places where we truly belong, no longer sites of struggle, but rather nurturing and supportive environments in which our creativity and resourcefulness can thrive. We can fly. Now, this would be "higher" education.

Recommended Readings

This set of readings represents some of the contributions of our Aboriginal scholars and a few non-Aboriginal scholars, which might help you to develop your own ideas about Aboriginal research.

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An Aboriginal Pedagogical Model: Recovering an Aboriginal Pedagogy from the Woodlands Cree

Cathy Wheaton

Prior to writing this paper, I was, at the time, struggling with the question "What is Native Studies?" This question was very difficult to answer, although I was in my fourth year of study. I found myself unable to answer the question, as I was, instead, focusing on two separate aspects of the question itself. I was being pulled in two directions, the reality of how I had experienced Native Studies and what I had actually hoped to learn. I then created two lists; one of them covered the topics within my classes and a second listing all the content and approaches I had envisioned. The two lists differed greatly. The list of topics describing the classes was very disjointed. It focused on every major issue of Aboriginal people in Canada, but never in the cohesive manner I would have liked. Rarely did I see the connections being directly drawn between all the different approaches in regards to the lives of Aboriginal people.

My first list of topics encompassed health, justice, politics, sociology, cultural traditions and other aspects of Aboriginal people. This fragmented and artificial separation of the life aspects of Aboriginal people did not consider how these kinds of artificial divides were, in themselves, problematic. In addition, their division into categories depended upon other distortions and misinterpretations as scholars tried to reassemble the "puzzle" that Aboriginal people seemed to appear to them.

Previous to this, I had looked at Aboriginal people, myself included, as total complete beings, not as jigsaw puzzles. It was very difficult to reassemble the parts and place them back into the context of what I was already familiar with. Aboriginal people appeared within academic writing as an object of study, and scholars' dissection of them was a regular occurrence. I often had to mentally re-center myself in order to determine how certain focuses were relevant in a more holistic way. I realized that focusing on such narrow dimensions of Aboriginal people was, in fact, a large part of the total dehumanization process that began by colonial activity since contact. We were said to have progressed within this field so we could dispel the images of savages and noble redskins, but we seemed to replace them with the lifeless products of scientific study. We, once again, had become objects of colonial practices, our own identities being determined by others. And yet, I found that what really struck me about other Aboriginal people was their strength, determination, and vision for the future. By failing to mention these very important aspects of Aboriginal people, academics were creating false images.

Within Native Studies, I also heard about the superiority of our discipline in comparison to other disciplines that attempted to study Aboriginal people. In classes, professors would often talk about the value and importance of oral history and how it had been ignored by other disciplines. Native Studies claimed to appreciate oral history as a valuable addition to historical and other research. They also talked about traditional knowledge, and elders' contributions. And yet, the professors who lectured on these important aspects of our field had never actually incorporated these elements of Aboriginal knowledge into their own course content. They, instead, continued to rant and rave about the inadequacies of competing disciplines, while using the same methodologies and approaches in their own work. Rarely did I see academics differ in their approaches from what they had been taught as students. They rarely reached outside of their disciplinary frameworks to add oral or other types of Aboriginal knowledge to their repertoire. They refused to educate themselves in the important aspects they criticized others for omitting. They continued, instead, to fragment the view of Aboriginal people in their own descriptions. I, of course, was confused, as I had expected someone to at least attempt to add some semblance of these missing elements into their classes.

My partner and I often discuss these issues. He presently teaches in Indian Studies and incorporates oral narratives and Aboriginal language into his course work. Aboriginal students appreciate this type of content, and its relevance to all students is readily apparent when the connection between the content of the courses and the reality of Aboriginal people, about whom they are studying, is made. Imagine a class on Cree history and culture, utilizing Cree oral traditions, teaching with a narrative style and studying Cree words in order to more fully understand Cree ways. I have witnessed this happening. And, I find it rather upsetting to realize that many scholars will instead continue to teach in a fundamentally different way, in a field that they have claimed is different.

I still have some questions about improving the discipline. Why is it that the problems identified within conventional academic approaches in Native Studies do not go beyond criticism? Why do academics continue to rely exclusively on written academic sources for the bulk of their content? An occasional guest lecture by an Aboriginal speaker cannot compensate for an instructor's inadequate inclusion of these sources in their course material.

An Aboriginal student may be able to compensate for their instructor's gaps by supplementing with their own experiences at times. But should this still occur? And what about others who are training to work for Aboriginal people; how can they be expected to fill in the missing pieces? Academics have an obligation to not repeat the mistakes of the disciplines they criticize.

I also wonder if it is possible to unite all the differing approaches contained within Native Studies into an all-encompassing methodology that would be true to Aboriginal people's existence? I now realize that Native Studies was, in fact, a mechanism that forced Aboriginal people to fit into non-Aboriginal conceptions of Aboriginal people. By basing Native Studies on the non-Aboriginal methodologies of law, anthropology, history and sociology, academics had carried over its baggage. It is no longer possible to convey or explore Aboriginal people as the actor in their own lives. They, instead, became the "Other" as non-Aboriginal academics trapped them into compartments of non-Aboriginal origin.

So, how do we remedy such an enormous difficulty? I quickly realized that trying to resolve the problems inherent in non-Aboriginal approaches was futile, and I could not effectively reconstruct non-Aboriginal methodologies that were borne out of non-Aboriginal construction. In this paper, I decided to overlook the entire structure of Native Studies. My first step was to look first at how students were learning in Native Studies and the university. I believed that Aboriginal-based content would not be totally effective if the means of teaching it were inconsistent with its aim. I needed to begin with the students and then work from the students outward. I believe in Aboriginal knowledge, its content and its dissemination. As a very recent graduate, I think that, by beginning with students, I can readily use this as my orientation.

The pedagogical model that I will recover may not, at first, appear to belong in a university setting. Its processes are derived from an Aboriginal home and not the university. Yet, it is appropriate to begin from this location, and through a relationship that more truly welcomes Aboriginal conceptions of epistemology.

Before I move on, I must first consider how much of the present university course material is being taught in Native Studies classrooms. It is usually the norm for the so-called expert to lecture to the students. Previous to this stage, a scholar, with university recognized credentials endeavored to briefly study a group of people, of whom he or she is not a member and cannot communicate with well. He or she will usually observe the group for a brief time, write copious notes, compile them, write them up, publish it and thus becomes the expert. Their writing will then be referred to in classes which assists in teaching about the group of people studied. This will even occur if the group members are physically present as students. These academic scholars will frequently reveal only a narrow, poorly interpreted view of the people they studied, and never acknowledge that the small part that they dissected is part of a total being that is unable to function as a whole due to its dismemberment. These pieces will then be used to provide evidence to prove their theories. These are the materials from which new paradigms emerge. If this is the process by which Native Studies education is received by Native Studies students, it is resting upon abstractions of reality and cannot be expected to depict Aboriginal people to others.

Another serious flaw of common approaches in Native Studies is based on the academy's separation of the secular and belief systems of Aboriginal people. By encouraging this division when studying the unified aspects of Aboriginal people's lives, they obstruct a holistic approach to Aboriginal epistemology. Aboriginal epistemology must remain intact with its components in order to be true to its origins. And yet, many dominant, non-Aboriginal, theoretical perspectives resist belief systems, landscapes that nurture them, kinship ties that hold Aboriginal people together, the stories which pass on their history to other generations, and the on-going changes that occur to all Aboriginal people in Canada.

Within conventional history, Aboriginal people are described in terms of their accomplishments as noted by documented sources. The Aboriginal people who are their descendants play a very minor role in conventional historical approaches. Conventional historical approaches also create artificial boundaries between the past and present, and attempt to destroy the continuum that exists. This continuum does not cease to exist because the past events of Aboriginal people have been carried forward to our generation. When historians look at Aboriginal people without regard for this culturally reinforced notion of non-linear dynamism, they distort the realities of Aboriginal existence itself to their students, and others.

Another problem often encountered in Native Studies is diversity among Aboriginal people. In its efforts to appear all-knowing and to portray a consistent picture of Aboriginal people across a wide range, these departments often disregard the immense diversity within them. Within Saskatchewan, focusing only on linguistic diversity, we have groups from Woodlands Cree, Plains Cree, Swampy Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Nakota, Dakota, and Lakota families. Yet, these linguistic groups have shifted, have blended with neighboring groups, and have absorbed each other's people. And yet, these people are depicted as being static and similar to one another. It is very offensive to tell an Aboriginal person that is familiar with the history of their own lineage that their traditions are determined by one set of descriptors when, in reality, there can be wide ranges within groups themselves. Although I myself am Cree, I do not find as many similarities with other Cree groups outside of northern Saskatchewan, although we may share linguistic preferences. Our lifestyles within our tribal history have changed and continue to change in response to changes in our surroundings. The urban Cree and the land-based Cree are not the same and each deal with different circumstances in different ways. By ignoring their realities, academics describe stereotypical Crees who have remained static during the course of their existence. It appears to be easier to depict an enormous group of people as one homogeneous, massive group.

All of these linear perspectives attempt to dictate to Aboriginal people who they are and have framed the questions concerning their existence. Is it appropriate for non-Aboriginal people to attempt to ask questions about Aboriginal people if they are unaware of these very crucial nuances of difference? Is it appropriate for scholars to formulate answers without the active input of Aboriginal people? I believe that Aboriginal scholars, who are already familiar with these differences, are more adequately prepared to derive questions, and the subtle ways in which we can explore their answers. It is disrespectful to exclude Aboriginal people from their own existence except to simply provide evidence to support non-Aboriginal conceptions of Aboriginal people. I think that Aboriginal people should be the active participants in identifying their knowledge, and that they should determine how this will happen.

Many academics refuse to acknowledge that Aboriginal people's existence and conceptions of themselves are very different from their own. Objectification does not convey a "true" picture of anyone; objectification, in fact, creates a false image of Aboriginal people, more like a caricature than a portrait. If Aboriginal people determine how the picture of them should be created, and with what materials and techniques, the final composition will more accurately depict Aboriginal people and the vitality of their lives. Too often, academics seem to prefer a lifeless, flat image in comparison to an exciting vital one.

Aboriginal people's dynamism is like the world in which they live. Both constantly change, and remain largely unpredictable and incredibly complex. The world does not revolve around the ideas of human beings; human beings cope with the world they inhabit. We are only a part of the huge network of life on the planet. And Aboriginal people do not follow the contrived theoretical frameworks of intellects who cannot comprehend the complex contents of Aboriginal lives. The university must refrain from its continuing attempts to frame the dynamism of Aboriginal existence. I hope, instead, to urge a commitment from you, as scholars, to commit to concentrate on how Aboriginal people have always seen their own existence instead of trying to layer another people's existence on them. Aboriginal dynamism should frame our work. We must look internally, as Aboriginal people, to revive old ways and use them within education in the present context. The old ways have already proven their worth by the survival of our people.

An internal type of inquiry may yield new approaches for Native Studies. I am reluctant to call Aboriginal epistemological frameworks theories. They are more fluid than theories, and have the ability to cope with change in exceptional ways. Many non-Aboriginal approaches cannot cope with the reality of Aboriginal people. Non-Aboriginal theoretical approaches can often be very rigid when they encounter difference within Aboriginal people; they often collapse under the weight of continuing changes.

Much of what I have already learned as a Woodlands Cree differs drastically from my non-Aboriginal based and delivered education. Within the setting of the university, I was presented with abstract theories about Aboriginal people. The legitimacy of this knowledge was often based upon positivist thinking. Inherent to the validation of 'legitimate' knowledge was objectivity. Cursory attention was, or is, paid to real-life Aboriginal experiences that are often transmitted through oral accounts and narratives. I have spent many years trying to decipher the language of an abstract, academic world to determine whether it is relevant to my conceptions as an Aboriginal person. Professors talked about my people as if they were mere concepts instead of flesh and blood human beings. I have also listened to romantic approaches that have idealized and mystified Aboriginal people. This process of dehumanization and idealization will continue unless we take another direction. Aboriginal people, who are stripped of their capacities to change, adapt and discover their own paths in a world will not thrive. Many of the conceptions of Aboriginal life by my instructors did not encompass my own experience. Now, I wish to add my own experience to counter this feeling of discomfort, and suggest we base teaching and learning on Aboriginal experiences. Through this method, we can also demonstrate how we can use Aboriginal epistemology as our source of knowledge to improve the discipline of Native Studies. Let me begin by relating a story of my own.

I will be moving, in this paper, from the artificial environment of the university and into an organic environment. Many structures within the academy are not willing to accept an Aboriginal approach to knowledge. But, I will return to the knowledge of my people to recover and reclaim a new way of inquiry, and bring it to the academy to prepare a safe place for the knowledge that has been passed.

My people educated themselves and survived for eons prior to the arrival of Europeans. They already possessed the learning and teaching methods that ensured their continual survival in spite of tremendous changes. Europeans told us our education was inadequate and unable to assist us in adapting to our new circumstances. In retrospect, if this were true, I would not be here today. I am confident that the ways of my own people possessed great strengths, as evidenced by their continuing existence. By going directly to myself, my own family and my ancestors as my source of knowledge, I have discovered that the land itself was integral to how my people viewed the world and our place within it. Before I tell you about my experience, I need to talk about my relationship with the land so you may understand why I believe this relationship is so influential.

Many Woodlands Cree feel strongly about remaining connected to the land base in order to practice traditional lifestyles. Like many Woodland Cree, I was able to experience many learning experiences while occupying the land and sustaining myself upon it. I now possess a concrete and deep spiritual bond with the earth. By occupying the land for long periods of time as a child, I grew attached to it. My experiences were deeply felt and continue to draw me back to the land even today. My connection with the earth has created my sense of location within creation. The land has enabled my reasons for existence to become clear. Like my ancestors, I do not question my existence when I occupy the land. By living and becoming part of creation itself, I now possess a strong sense of how and where I was meant to live. A traditional lifestyle on the land does not challenge the original intents of the Creator who placed my ancestors here long ago. When I co-exist with the earth, it becomes apparent why I often experience discomfort in my life as I live bound by artificial structures. My self-imposed exile from the earth has created a sense of loss and loneliness at times. It is physically and emotionally draining to constantly renegotiate my destiny away from the land as I continue to live in an urban space. It is frustrating for me to cope with the void I have created. I feel, in many ways, that this void is a large reason why so many of our people are lost and unhappy within cities. Yet, living on the land as an Aboriginal Indigenous person is an almost impossible goal when we reflect on how the world has changed for our people. It will be a difficult journey for our children as they face greater changes in the future. We need to also realize that this land relationship should be included in our own discussions with each other. This is why I have chosen the experience that I will relate to you and why this experience has yielded an Aboriginal pedagogy. I believe that a similar kind of process is at the heart of recovering other Aboriginal models on which to base Native Studies.

I want to talk about the education I have received from my family. My mother taught me skills intrinsic to my people's traditional lifestyles which were land-based. The lifestyles of my family have changed only recently, since my mother's generation. It was the norm in my family to know certain skills in order to follow a traditional lifestyle as a Woodland people. I am fortunate in that I use personal experiences to contemplate traditional teachings. I draw upon these experiences to recover an Aboriginal pedagogical model to base teaching and learning. How did my family teach and learn the skills they needed to survive? My people (the Woodlands Cree), for many countless generations, have sustained themselves by learning living by the rules of the environment. This environment was not static or artificial. They coped with its changes on a daily basis. Through their connection to the land, they derived knowledge from the earth itself. This is my source of the Aboriginal pedagogy I hope to add to Native Studies. Native Studies is fundamentally flawed due to its non-Aboriginal origins/stances. By finding a new location for learning itself, a new way of thinking about knowledge acquisition that encompasses Aboriginal epistemology can begin to be realized. I realized that an Aboriginal pedagogy would support and strengthen Aboriginal epistemology. This is the primary goal of this model.

The story that follows is the result of my internal search for an Aboriginal learning experience. I began to recall what I had learned from my many experiences within the environment of the 'bush.' My mother taught me many things, but one example I wish to relate is the dynamics of Aboriginal learning within my family. I had learned to catch rabbits at a very young age. I purposely talk about this skill as it demonstrates the success of Aboriginal pedagogy with a young child. If an eight-year-old is able to acquire the skills necessary to capture a rabbit with only a piece of wire, it must be a good example of successful teaching and learning.

Although I was very young, I was able to freely wander through the bush as a child. My parents trusted me to be sensible in walking around the bush alone, and I knew I would not wander aimlessly. I was always walking through the trees looking for berries and plants, and pretending to hunt for animals. I'll never forget the day I actually did get lost, but I found my way back and never told my parents that I had walked for hours trying to find my way back. I realized that, by carefully listening and walking towards the lake and then following its shoreline, I would eventually get back. I did.

I had often accompanied my mother when she worked in the bush. My father had also built a home for us to live in from trees that grew in the area. My mother had no need to rely on store-bought goods for our food. We often ate wild chickens, ducks, rabbits, and fish - whatever was caught. She was able to find food all around us. I remember one time I cried for candy and she gave me the gum from a spruce tree to chew. It was bitter at first, but I was amazed at how even candy was provided by the land. She also showed me which plants and berries were suitable for eating and which to avoid. She told me the names of the plants and told me how, when she was a little girl, she ate the very same things. I knew how to make a sling shot and a toy bow and arrow to play with, how to build a fire, how to prepare wild food, and how to observe my surroundings. She also taught me about dangers, to avoid the water when alone as many children had lost their lives by not respecting its dangers.

I walked with my mother as she set rabbit snares, watching intently and with amazement as my mother would carefully choose an appropriate path on which to set a rabbit snare and catch a rabbit. She looked carefully for a well-travelled trail and then proceeded to attach a pre-made wire noose to an adjacent tree. While she was actually setting a wire snare, she told me of the reasons why she placed small branches around the snare, "You want the rabbit to go in the snare instead of around it," she commented as she placed small obstacles around the noose. I wondered how the rabbits could not notice the wire snare and why they wouldn't just go around it. But, my mother explained that rabbits run very fast and that they travelled along the same path so they could eventually be trapped. I watched how she attached each snare and asked questions throughout the process. Only later would I realize how complicated a process my mother was performing. My mother would always set several snares at a time in the hope of catching at least one rabbit for a meal. The next day, we would return to our 'trapline' and see if any of the snares had trapped a rabbit. With luck, we would get at least one rabbit.

My mother was never angry or disappointed if she did not catch anything, but, rather, she exhibited an acceptance about not being successful and told me that, sometimes, the rabbits don't go where we want them to. By explaining this, I learned that I needed to be patient and persistent. I also learned not to question my methods if they did not always yield results. She told me that it was silly to get mad at events over which we had no control. She was not able to make a rabbit go where she wanted, and neither was I.

Sometimes, we would catch several and then I would watch how she prepared and cooked them. Soon, my mother allowed me to set my own snares, but, of course, I was not successful at first. I would always wonder why she was so much luckier than I was. I did not, at first, realize the precise way in which she had actually set her snares. I continued to accompany her on her own snare-setting and soon began to notice more of the necessary details she demonstrated why she was more successful. She would also provide guidance by looking at my snares and telling me how they were improperly set. She would also later advise me as to how I should consider where and how the rabbit ran in order to set my snare properly. "Your trails are no longer being used" or "The snare is too low" were reminders of oversights I had made in my observation of her own techniques in catching rabbits.

Again and again, I set my own snares with the hope that I would eventually perfect my skill. Although I was very young at the time, my parents knew that I was able to set my own rabbit snares without them being with me. I became more and more attentive to the details of how my mother performed her snare setting and gradually I mimicked her methods in my attempts. I continuously thought about my oversights and persisted until, one day, I was successful. By watching her and seeing her persistence, I had learned that the process of learning was something long, but not pointless.

What did I discover from this particular example of Aboriginal learning? How did I identify the successful features of this system of learning which functions without the use of the abstract or written word? One of the first steps I determined in recovering this system of learning was the identification of multiple processes of learning. One of the first things I noted was the non-linear process of learning. It was a complex cycle of learning and was composed of several fundamental processes that occurred continuously. I became aware of this knowledge recently although, at the time, I was immersed in it. Perhaps, this was why I had not previously identified it. Yet, when I began to identify the characteristics of how learning occurred in my own childhood, I realized that my more formal methods of education were, in fact, missing many of the fundamental processes I later identified. This led me to think that these processes were, in fact, necessary and helped to explain to me why the knowledge I had received in non-Aboriginal institutions were inadequate.

I finally began to list some of what I saw as being essential to the process of learning that I derived. The processes I identified were: **observation, experience, introspection** and **inquiry**. These four processes supported each other and occurred both simultaneously and sequentially within the learning style that I have described. The process itself was complex, not following a regular pattern, coping with my own learning abilities. All four processes were necessary in this experience and others so that I could engage myself fully in the process of learning within this model.

The first major process in this model of learning is the process of **observation**. As a child, I was exposed to the active process of capturing rabbits by my mother by being physically present in order to note how another person snares rabbits. I was, therefore, able to learn in the initial stage of the learning cycle by physically surveying a process and also using inquiry and introspection prior to actually engaging in it. I inquired about aspects of the task that puzzled me. I was also given additional information from my mother, as teacher, as she frequently explained why she did certain things in certain ways. This additional information informed me about the act itself, its processes, and the details of it, so that I could use this information when I later tried to perform the task myself. She also taught me that observation was an active process and that I needed to be wholly observant with my mind as well as my senses. Questioning aspects of what I observed allowed me to more fully realize all aspects of what was before me. It taught me to observe certain things in her task that I may have not otherwise noticed.

During the period of observation, I was also taught that tasks and their methods of accomplishment were valid, as I was actually seeing them in practice. I identified the efficiency due to my observation of them in practice, and also knew that these same methods had been handed down to my mother from other skilled trappers. My maternal grandfather was a trapper and my grandmother was also skilled at procuring animals for food. The very survival of my family and their ancestors were living proof of the validity of the methods used to acquire food. The process of observation was, in itself, a multiple stage in the learning process.

The next process that I identified during the learning process was **experience**. I now had a rudimentary training through observation, but the next step, for me, was to gain the skill of snaring through actual practice in order to move from the abstract to the actual experience of snaring. Once I began to actually try to snare on my own, I soon realized that what I had initially observed was not as easy as it looked. I realized that there were many hidden skills that I had not remembered or paid as much attention to, and these oversights resulted in my initial attempts to capture a rabbit to fail.

I found myself then engaging in another step in the learning process, **introspection**. I needed to look at my teacher's successes and my own attempts at success in my task in a way that allowed me to formulate strategies to complete my task. My failure, followed by reflection on what I had done, in order to figure out why I had been unsuccessful, was vital. I then began to try these new ideas again in practice in order to increase my chances of success. I also began to again engage in observing my mother who was already successful in the task, in order to observe her actions for the procedures that she used that I was missing or doing incorrectly. My mother also accompanied me to my own snares and would be able to simply look at my snares and tell me what I was doing wrong. I then continued to set more snares, trying to remember what to watch for, and found I was soon successful at my attempts. I also began to question my teacher more about ways in which to increase my success and learned that **inquiry** was also a necessary process when learning through this method.

I discovered that, in order to facilitate this learning style, the teacher needed to be aware of the necessity of all the processes to occur or my learning would be negatively affected. Had my mother prevented me from watching her perform the task I later learned, or discouraged my inquiry of it, I would have been prevented from later performing the task on my own. Her teaching style allowed me to go through all four processes many times. I learned a skill that many adults may never learn.

My mother was aware of my need to learn this skill through multiple processes. And this knowledge was passed on to her through her own learning of similar tasks by her parents, in addition to the passing on of traditional knowledge from countless previous generations. It was an intrinsic part of her, as a Woodlands Cree woman, being raised on the land that she occupied. It was not until she was forcibly removed from this environment, and went through the residential school experience, that the learning styles of her ancestors lost their influence.

If we contrast and compare this process of education with non-Aboriginal based processed of education, we can begin to see why the absence of these particular processes of education creates tremendous difficulty in teaching students to learn about Aboriginal people and their own knowledge. In observing non-Aboriginal pedagogy, we see an emphasis on the teacher simply telling the student things without observation or experience. Because the student does not have the support of these active processes, knowledge that is transmitted becomes abstract and is disconnected to a real event. Because neither the student nor the teacher is active, concepts remain abstract and incomprehensible. The non-Aboriginal instructor, and the ideas on which the instructor bases his or her teachings, is largely devoid of either direct or indirect experience and, therefore, never achieves a state of reality from the students or even the instructor's perspective. All that really supports what they hear and repeat is the faith that what they consider knowledge is, in fact, true. They have no other basis to believe this kind of knowledge. They rely, instead, on the written word which relates experiences from distant and removed participants who have no links to the knowledge that they teach.

I have been questioned on these processes and their applicability in the context of teaching in other settings that are non-Aboriginal. I wish to assert that these processes are, in fact, a valuable addition to the present systems of education in any teaching topic, not only when attempting to teach about Aboriginal people. By incorporating observation, experience, introspection and inquiry during the education process, we will begin to create linkages from the experiences of human beings and transmit them wholly to students in the classroom. We are, unfortunately, limited by this setting within school classrooms of being able to convey all dimensions of human experience, but, by striving to be as inclusive as possible, we can approach the goals of holistic teaching and learning.

History itself, when viewed as being separate from the present and the future, can become vital to its students when those who have linkages to past historical events are brought into the classroom. By looking at history strictly through the written word, we lose its human aspect and fail to convey all of its nuances. Students also need to be able to see how and why history is relevant to them and people who experienced it first hand. Within many Aboriginal families, history has retained its linkages to the past through its descendants who have been taught its relevance. It is unlikely that a person who is removed from the lifestyles and daily occurrences of this training can adequately relate historical events properly to others.

Much of what I am responding to is an absence or a distance created by educational institutions in their efforts to attempt to teach knowledge of Aboriginal people. I propose that, by adding experience, direct and indirect, we can shorten this distance and fill in the gaps in a way that facilitates learning itself. For many students, the process of learning has become a separate entity which remains disconnected from their lives. Knowledge needs to be nurtured and delivered in ways that enable students to respond to it in a more meaningful way. For many students, knowledge fails to be relevant to their own experiences, and the relationship between what the teachers teach and what they experience outside of the school classroom are often very different. If teachers are not able to bring these different aspects of education closer together, many students will continue their classes with little knowledge and no skills with which to learn and educate themselves. In Native Studies, we are further urged to find a pathway towards knowledge of our own that stresses our own values and knowledge in an Aboriginal way. We should utilize many Aboriginal models as a means to enrich our education at the University. For many non-Aboriginal students, this experience will be truly enlightening. Seeing relevance in the context of the classroom must become a priority for those who teach others. Students now have to find this for themselves; some never acquire the ability to do so.

If we look to Aboriginal elders, we see that their own methods of teaching are very much in line with the learning processes I have described. Elders talk about things and experiences using stories, and drawing important lessons upon them. They also actively involve the student. Students are encouraged to be introspective and to draw their own conclusions on their responses to oral narratives. Serious teachings are not contrived, they are real! Inquiry is a very important aspect of how they counsel students. They leave room for students themselves to inquire as to why things occur, and do not attempt to create knowledge, but help students to derive it. Oral narratives offer new experiences upon which to draw from while relaying the accumulated knowledge of others. Elders are constantly deriving teachings from knowledge that exists. They do not attempt to present the abstract as the reality itself. Abstract concepts in the non-Aboriginal world are, in fact, based on real and experience-based conceptions, but these linkages have been separated by the division between humans and the earth they occupy, and the severing of their connection with their past.

Why are these four processes necessary in this particular process of learning? The first step, observation, is the initial step when actively introducing someone to a skill. The teachers must repeat the process with the student present in order for the student to gain a basic understanding of the actual process. However, the teacher engages the student in inquiry if the student asks why the teacher is doing the task in a certain way. The teacher may explain the reasons immediately or decide that the student needs to view the process more thoroughly and tells the student that the process of observation needs to continue. This teaches the student the value of careful observation and patience in becoming skilled at each step in the learning process. Thinking and questioning are also necessary in order to utilize the experiences of practice to realize education to its highest potential.

There are situations when elders will purposely not tell a person the answer to a question even if they know it. Instead, the elder may encourage the student to become introspective and inquire deeply about the answer to a question. Elders know and understand the value of experiential learning and often use the indirect experience of stories to add the experiential dimension to the learning process. They realize that ready solutions can lead a person to make decisions without the addition of introspection, and lead to the reluctance of the student to think about what and why they do what they do. Elders will frequently tell young people to place their problems in perspective with the totality of their lives and to think about what they are asking. Elders realize that, if the student is not fully cognizant of the context of the situation, any further action may be misguided. The need for the student to become introspective about their problems, and to appreciate the value of adept observation, will reinforce their learning. They realize that a student who neglects to conceptualize the context of their situation without this critical reflection cannot become introspective in a meaningful way. Elders recognize the need of students to involve themselves in a process that involves meaningful inquiry and introspection in order to prepare the students' minds for learning. It is not meaningful or productive in the learning process *to expect instant answers to difficult questions.*

They also stress the need to connect experience and practice to knowledge to validate it for the student. They do not guess at the answers if they are unsure. Elders do not pretend to know about matters in which they have no experience. They will often suggest going to another more knowledgeable person for answers that they cannot provide. Students who learn in this manner are also critical thinkers who know how to judge the validity of knowledge that they receive. By relying on all four processes of understanding, they can acquire a holistic awareness of the world in which they live.

We may realize other aspects of holistic pedagogical approaches when we use our entire intellect during the learning process. At the same time, we embed the knowledge we learn through multiple processes of learning. This pedagogical model demonstrates the importance of observation, experience, inquiry and introspection as vital elements. These processes demand critical skills from its student and yield a total learning experience. I hope that I have shown how an Aboriginal learning system can be applied in the academy. Through the examination of oral narratives, we can conceive of ways of learning and creating a Native Studies that truly educates about Aboriginal people.

Sources

Cora Wheaton (nee Bird)	ninikawi
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Teaching/Learning Across Cultures: Strategies for Success

Ray Barnhardt

As an educator, how can you enter into and learn about a new community in a way that will maximize your chances of making a positive contribution to the educational experiences of the students with whom you will work? There are no simple prescriptions in response to that question, but there are some strategies you can draw upon to guide you into a new teaching situation and help you adapt your teaching practices to better serve the unique educational needs of that cultural community. The compilation of tips and advice that follows is a distillation of the experiences of many educators who have learned to adapt their work to the physical and cultural environment in which they are located. Although the author's experiences have been drawn mostly from work in Native villages in rural Alaska, the issues will be addressed in ways that are applicable in any setting involving people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

While a condensed version of such a complex subject runs the risk of over-simplification and misinterpretation, it is offered here as a starting point for an on-going journey of personal exploration and cross-cultural sensitization that each of us as educators – Native or non-Native – must undertake if we are to relate to people from other cultural backgrounds in a respectful and constructive manner. When we learn to relate to each other and teach in a culturally considerate way, we benefit not only those with whom we work, but we benefit ourselves as well. We are all cultural beings, and accelerating changes in the makeup of the world around us makes that fact an increasingly obvious and inescapable aspect of our daily existence. How then can we take culture into account in our work as educators?

How do you enter a new cultural community?

First impressions count! The way you present yourself to people in a new community will have a lasting impact on how they perceive and relate to you and, consequently, on how you perceive them. This is especially true in a small village where everyone lives in close proximity to one another, but it is also true in the context of classrooms as micro-communities. The first thing to remember is that many other teachers have come and gone before you, so students and parents have developed their own way of making sense out of their relationships with strangers. While this may be a new experience for you, it is not for the host community. The background and perspective you bring to the situation, particularly in terms of cross-cultural experience, will have a major bearing on how you present yourself in a new setting. If you have taught previously in a comparable community, or are yourself from a similar cultural background (e.g., an indigenous teacher), you will have relationships and experiences to build upon when you enter the new community that a beginning teacher without that prior experience will not have available. For the purposes of making this limited review as useful as possible, the emphasis will be on the latter situation, where the teacher is assumed to be starting from scratch in a new community and/or cultural situation.

The biggest challenge you face is getting to know people on their own terms and letting them get to know you as a person, rather than just as a "teacher." The tendency for people who make their living off the printed word is to turn to the nearest library or bookstore when confronted with a new situation about which they lack information. While it may be useful to acquire some basic factual information about your new cultural home beforehand, most of what you need to know about the people and the community that you will be working with is probably best acquired firsthand, with minimal influence from someone else's perceptual filters. The fewer prior conceptions and the less cultural baggage that you carry into the situation, the more likely that you will be able to avoid jumping to superficial conclusions, leaving you free to learn what it takes to make a constructive entry into the local flow of life.

There are many layers of shared understanding in any cultural community, and for an outsider to even begin to recognize that the deeper layers exist requires a considerable openness of mind and a great deal of time and effort. Our first impressions of a new culture are usually formed in response to the more obvious surface aspects that we can see, hear, and relate to our own prior experience, so it is important to withhold judgement and defer closure on our interpretation of behavior and events as long as possible. Once we arrive at a conclusion or form an opinion, we begin to rely on that explanation for guiding our subsequent behavior, and hesitate to assimilate new information that may lead to a deeper understanding. The resulting myopia can contribute to numerous problems, including inappropriately low expectations regarding student abilities.

We can minimize the potential problems outlined above and accelerate our immersion into a new cultural community in a number of ways. If the opportunity exists, one of the most useful steps you can take is to get involved in the community well before you assume the role of teacher. Let people get to know you as a person first, and this will have enormous payoff in everything that you do as a teacher. If possible and appropriate, get involved in the community where your students live early enough to join in traditional summer activities, so you can get to know people on their terms and begin to see life through their eyes. If early arrival is not possible, start the school year with an extended camp experience with your students and other members of the community. This will enable you to make your classroom lessons much more meaningful for your students, and it will open up avenues of communication that will be beneficial to everyone involved.

If you are looking for a place to live, consider how your housing and lifestyle will set you off from, or help you blend into, the community. While housing that sets you apart from the community may be convenient (when available), you pay a price in terms of your relationship to the rest of the community. Whenever possible, choose immersion over isolation, but don't forget who you are in the process. You will be more respected for being yourself than for "going Native." Seek advice from the practitioners of the culture in which you are situated, and always convey respect for their ways, recognizing that you are a guest in someone else's community. If you encounter situations of apparent social breakdown and dysfunctionality, be especially careful to exercise discretion and obtain the views of others before you take any precipitous action.

The most important consideration when entering a new cultural community is keeping an open mind and accepting people on their own terms. A little attention to how you present yourself in the beginning can make a big difference in your relationships for the remainder of your stay in the community. First impressions do count!

What do you need to know?

Since learning a culture is a lifetime undertaking, where do you as a newcomer start, and what are the most important aspects to be considered? One of the first things to recognize is that the more you learn about another culture, the more you will find out about yourself. We all carry around our own sub-conscious culturally conditioned filters for making sense out of the world around us, and it isn't until we encounter people with a substantially different set of filters that we have to confront the assumptions, predispositions and beliefs that we take for granted and which make us who we are. To illustrate how those differences can come into play, the following chart summarizes some of the characteristics that tend to distinguish the view of the world as exhibited in many indigenous societies from that embodied in Western scientific tradition.

Indigenous World View	**Western World View**
Spirituality is imbedded in all elements of the cosmos	Spirituality is centered in a single Supreme Being
Humans have responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationships with the natural world	Humans exercise dominion over nature to use it for personal and economic gain
Need for reciprocity between human and natural worlds - resources are viewed as gifts	Natural resources are available for unilateral human exploitation
Nature is honored routinely through daily spiritual practice	Spiritual practices are intermittent and set apart from daily life
Wisdom and ethics are derived from direct experience with the natural world	Human reason transcends the natural world and can produce insights independently
Universe is made up of dynamic, ever-changing natural forces	Universe is made up of an array of static physical objects
Universe is viewed as a holistic, integrative system with a unifying life force	Universe is compartmentalized in dualistic forms and reduced to progressively smaller conceptual parts
Time is circular with natural cycles that sustain all life	Time is a linear chronology of "human progress"
Nature will always possess unfathomable mysteries	Nature is completely decipherable to the rational human mind
Human thought, feelings and words are inextricably bound to all other aspects of the universe	Human thought, feelings and words are formed apart from the surrounding world
Human role is to participate in the orderly designs of nature	Human role is to dissect, analyze and manipulate nature for own ends

Respect for elders is based on their compassion and reconciliation of outer- and inner-directed knowledge	Respect for others is based on material achievement and chronological old age
Sense of empathy and kinship with other forms of life	Sense of separateness from and superiority over other forms of life
View proper human relationship with nature as a continuous two-way, transactional dialogue	View relationship of humans to nature as a one-way, hierarchical imperative

(Adapted from Knudtson and Suzuki, 1992)

Differences in cultural perspective such as those outlined above have enormous implications for all aspects of how we approach the tasks of everyday life, not the least of which is the education of succeeding generations. In most indigenous communities today, it is apparent that aspects of both the indigenous and Western perspectives are present in varying degrees, though neither may be present in a fully cohesive fashion. Furthermore, it is not necessary (nor is it possible) for an outsider to fully comprehend the subtleties and inner workings of another cultural system (even if it is still fully functional) to be able to perform a useful role in that cultural community. What is necessary, however, is a recognition that such differences do exist, an understanding of how these potentially conflicting cultural forces can impact peoples' lives, and a willingness to set aside one's own cultural predispositions long enough to convey respect for a validity of others.

The particulars of an unfamiliar cultural system can be effectively attended to without a thorough knowledge of that culture, as long as you know how to make appropriate use of local expertise and community resources. As you come to understand how another cultural system works, you will also be learning more about how culture influences behavior generally, so the particulars of the new situation will lead to tentative generalizations in your own understanding, which, in turn, will help you decipher the next set of particulars. This should be a never-ending cycle through which you continue to learn as much about yourself as you do about others and, along the way, you can expect to face some tough questions, like "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" - questions that we rarely encounter in our own familiar cultural worlds.

Two of the most useful steps a new teacher can take to begin to see beyond the surface features of a new community are getting to know some of the Elders or other culture-bearers, and becoming familiar with aspects of the local language. By visiting Elders in the community, you will be giving evidence of your respect for the carriers of the local culture, while, at the same time, you will be learning about the values, beliefs and rules of cultural behavior that will provide a baseline for your teaching. Showing enough interest in the local language or dialect to pick up even a few phrases and understand some of its structural features will go a long way toward building your credibility in the community and in helping you recognize the basis for local variations on English language use in the classroom. At no point should you assume, however, that you know everything you need to know to fully integrate the local culture into your teaching. When learning about another culture, the more you learn, the more you find that you don't know. Always assume the role of learner, so that each succeeding year you can look back on the preceding year and wonder how you could have been so naive. When you think you know it all, it's time to quit teaching.

What should you teach?

Having negotiated your way into a new cultural community, how do you now integrate what you have learned into your teaching? Some of the first concerns you will have to confront revolve around the expectations of the other teachers, the school district, and the community, not all of whom may be in agreement on where or how the local culture fits into the curriculum. As a professional educator, your first responsibility is to the students in your charge, but they do not exist in isolation, so you will have to balance consideration of their individual needs with consideration of the many other immediate and distant variables that will come into play in the course of their experiences as students and as adults in a rapidly changing world.

Your task is to help the students connect to the world around them in ways that prepare them for the responsibilities and opportunities that they will face as adults. That means they need to know as much as possible about their own immediate world as well as the larger world in which they are situated, and the inter-relationships between the two. To achieve such a goal requires attention to the local culture in a holistic and integrative manner across the curriculum, rather than as an add-on component for a few hours a week after attending to the "real" curriculum. The baseline for the curriculum should be the local cultural community, with everything else being built upon and grounded in that reality.

Whatever piece of the curriculum you are responsible for, imbed it first in the world with which the students are familiar and work outward from there. Adapt the content to the local scene and then help the students connect it to the region, the nation, and the world. Keep in mind the adage "Think globally, act locally!" as you prepare your lessons. If students are to have any influence over their lives as adults, they need to understand who they are, where they fit into the world, and how "the system" works. It is your responsibility as a teacher to help them achieve that understanding.

When considering what to teach, keep in mind that the content of the curriculum is heavily influenced by the context in which it is taught. Think less in terms of what you are teaching and more in terms of what students might be learning. How can you create appropriate learning environments that reinforce what it is you are trying to teach? Does an Elder telling a traditional story have the same meaning and significance when done in a classroom setting as it would have out on the riverbank, or in the Elder's home? More likely not, so carefully consider the kind of situational factors (setting, time, resources, persons involved, etc.) that may have a bearing on what your students are learning. Content cannot be taught apart from context - each influences the other, and this is especially critical when cultural differences are present. In the end, your most important task is to help students learn how to learn, so while you are teaching subject matter, you also need to be attending to broader process skills, such as problem solving, decision making, communicating, inductive reasoning, etc. - skills that are applicable across time and place. It is skills such as these, learned in culturally adaptive ways, that enable students to put the subject matter they acquire to use in ways that are beneficial to themselves, their community and society as a whole.

How should you teach?

There are as many ways to teach as there are teachers, and for each teacher there are as many ways to approach teaching as there are situations in which to teach. The first axiom for any teacher, especially in a cross-cultural setting, is to adapt your teaching to the context of the students, school and community in which you are working. In other words, build your teaching approach in response to the conditions in front of you, and don't assume that what worked in one situation will work the same in another. While it is useful to have a "bag of tricks" available to get you started, don't assume the bag is complete – continue to develop new approaches through trial-and-error on an on-going basis.

Whenever possible, make use of local community resources (parents, elders, local leaders, etc.) and extend the classroom out into the community, to bring real-world significance to that which you are teaching (Barnhardt, 1990). To facilitate this, incorporate experientially oriented projects into your lessons and put students to work performing everyday tasks and providing services in the community (e.g. internships, student-run enterprises, local histories, community needs assessments, etc.). Take students on extended field trips to cultural sites, local offices, businesses and industries. Whether in the classroom or in the field, create a congenial atmosphere that draws students into the activity at hand and allows them to experience learning as a natural everyday activity, rather than a formality confined to the classroom. Natural settings are more likely to foster mutually productive and culturally appropriate communication and interaction patterns between teacher and student, than are highly structured and contrived situations created in the confines of the classroom. To the extent that you, as a teacher, can make yourself accessible to the students, you will be that much more successful in making what you teach accessible to them. This requires much patience and a willingness to risk making mistakes along the way, but the payoff will be greater success with the students in the long run.

How do you determine what has been learned?

The question of what constitutes success is difficult to answer under any educational circumstance, but it is especially complex in cross-cultural situations. Different people can exhibit competence in different ways, and when cultural differences are added to the mix, the ways can multiply dramatically. In addition to determining what it is we want students to learn, there is the task of determining how it will be measured, and not everything we want students to learn lends itself to easy and reliable measurement within the timeframe that schools expect to see results. On top of all this, we have the issue of cultural bias in everything from the instruments we use to the way we use them.

One of the most important considerations in this arena is to recognize that there are multiple forms and ways of applying and displaying intelligence and, therefore, we need to provide multiple avenues through which students can demonstrate their competence. Recent studies indicate that there are at least eight prominent forms of intelligence, with each individual, as well as clusters of people, having strengths in some forms and weaknesses in others. These include potential aptitudes in linguistic, logical-mathematical, naturalistic, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1991; Checkley, 1997). The problem is that schools tend to rely almost exclusively on the first two (linguistic and logical-mathematical) as the basis for measuring academic success, leaving other forms of intelligence largely on the sidelines. While you, as a teacher, are not in a position to unilaterally revamp the schooling enterprise to more fully incorporate the full range of intelligence, you are in a position to recognize them in your students and to provide a variety of avenues for them to access what you are teaching. At the same time, you can incorporate some of the more culturally adaptive modes of assessing student performance, such as portfolios, exhibitions, demonstrations, productions, etc. Through these more flexible and responsive approaches to assessment, it is possible to officially recognize the various forms of intelligence and accommodate cultural differences at the same time.

What can you do in a large urban school?

While some of the strategies described above may seem most appropriate for small rural schools with a homogenous cultural population, there are additional ways to make large multicultural urban schools more culturally sensitive as well. One of the most culturally inhibiting factors in urban schools is size and all the impersonal and bureaucratic conditions that go along with a large-scale institution. Some of the negative effects of size can be ameliorated within an urban setting by rethinking the way students (and thus teachers) experience the school and by viewing it more as a community than as an institution. For instance, a large school can be broken down into several smaller "learning communities," or schools-within-a-school. Students and teachers can form clusters that function as a cohesive unit with a support system based on personalized relationships. To overcome the constraints and inefficiencies of a highly compartmentalized schedule, classes can be organized in a block schedule format, where longer periods of time are made available for extended field trips and intensive projects without interfering with other classes. Through such arrangements, the economies-of-scale advantages of a large institution can be coupled with the flexibility and human dimensions of a smaller school.

The other area in which a potential problem can be made into an asset in an urban school is in the cultural mix of the student population. While it is not possible to fully attend to the cultural particulars of every student on a daily basis, it is possible to incorporate the rich mix of cultural backgrounds present in the classroom and school into the curriculum in ways that help students learn to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences among themselves and their classmates. The interest and strengths of each student can be recognized and rewarded through practices such as peer tutoring, cultural demonstrations, group projects, language comparisons, etc. Over time, students in culturally mixed schools can learn to treat cultural differences as part of the natural fabric of society, to be celebrated and identified as a strength, rather than as a threat. To this end, teachers in urban schools should be encouraged and supported in their efforts to capitalize on the diversity of cultures present in their classrooms.

Summary

What has been presented above is but a sampling of the strategies that teachers may draw upon to make their classrooms inviting places for students from all cultural backgrounds and persuasions. Teachers must recognize, however, that to stop here and assume you are now ready to take on any teaching situation runs the danger of oversimplification and misapplication of practices that are much more complex than a short review such as this can convey. For further insights, strategies and guidelines, educators can access the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* (1998) through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network at http://www.ankn.uaf.edu. If you wish to put any of the above to use, you should enter into the task with an open mind and an open heart, recognizing that the journey has just begun and that it will take a lifetime to complete. Happy travels!

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The "At Risk" Student: Defining Experiences

Melinda Hrechka

In order to provide effective programs in resource at a First Nations school, I found I had to take a broader look at what constitutes an "at risk" student. This paper will explore this topic in two parts. **Part I** of this paper will look at defining and exploring issues involved with educating the "at risk" student. **Part II** will discuss some personal accounts of resource programming in which both internal and external environments surrounding the school have been taken into consideration in delivering appropriate educational experiences for students in a First Nations school.

Part I: The "At Risk" Student

Defining the "At Risk" Student

The term "at risk" is being used more frequently to address a certain population of students in our schools that fit the criteria. Students "at risk" have always been in our educational system. The term is becoming more widely spread as educators address the issues surrounding these students while looking for methods and programming that will increase the quality of education for the "at risk" student.

To address ways in which to meet the academic needs of "at risk" students, it is very important to consider all aspects of the environment that surrounds them. Children learn to establish and verify perceptions and beliefs about the world through direct teaching by the older people in their community, and through identification with those people who care for them and are emotionally important to them (Bowman, 1994). The prior knowledge that a student brings with them into the school environment is one of the essential tools that will determine the outcomes of their learning needs. Learning styles, behavior patterns and adaptation strategies that can be identified will help determine how to program effectively in the resource area. When looking at a First Nation school, it is essential to adapt curriculum that is developed by provincial government standards to reflect the environment and culture in which it is being delivered.

The "at risk" student can be defined as a student whose academic background or prior performance may cause them to be perceived as candidates for future academic failure or early withdrawal (OECD, 1996). This includes students who are at risk of low achievement in the educational system, and students not reaching their own optimal social and personal development. The following are some of the environmental factors that contribute to what students may be "at risk" (OECD2, 1996):

1. Family Characteristics – these may include one-parent families, large families, transient families, families with long-term illness (especially mental illness), violent and abusive families, children who lack affection, warmth and love, or families which lack the resources to support education.
2. Language problems – due either to a lack of language development or poor knowledge of the language of instruction.
3. Poor Community Environments – characteristics include poor housing, lack of a functioning labour market, absence of community support, inadequate leisure facilities.

Along with looking outside the school and environmental factors that lead to the development of "at risk" students, there are contributing factors within the school itself that add to the problem. A child may be developmentally competent in his or her home environment, yet unable to adapt easily to a school environment or succeed at the academic tasks valued by teachers (Bowman, 1994). When I look at resource programming at our school, these critical factors must be addressed individually for each student. My experiences have led me to consider the following when looking at a student "at risk" within the school:

1. Conflict between home and school
2. Types of discipline policies within the school
3. Lack of counseling services accessible to the school
4. Negative perception of the school by the community
5. Outdated curriculum and lack of support to initiate new curriculum
6. No accountability of students' learning styles
7. Non-engaging teaching strategies
8. Low expectation
9. Insufficient language instruction relevant to students (Hixson, 1993).

It seems that traditional approaches to meeting the needs of "at risk" students have not been effective in the past. This is evident when we look at the growing number of "at risk" students in schools today. There are four generalizations that can be made in reference to proactive approaches to assist accommodating all students in the school environment: a) redefining cultural norms of the school; b) refocusing the content, methods, and priorities of the instructional program; c) attending to the personal/affective needs of students and staff; and, d) establishing effective relationships between the school and students' homes and the broader community (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990).

From the majority of research I have looked at, interventions seem to begin with looking at the student in a holistic manner. It is not simply enough to look at the student in the school environment. In order to address the issues, one has to look at the environment surrounding that student. The community, school, family and other contributing factors need to be included in the intervention process for a child "at risk."

Part II: Resource Programming for "At Risk" Students at a First Nations School

This study is about how I have to adapt my resource program to account for cultural and language differences at our First Nations school. While working in the resource area at our school, I have found that I have had to do some adjustments to make our programs relevant to the students' backgrounds and knowledge base.

Background Information

As there was no resource teacher in our school before I started teaching, I found this an excellent opportunity to implement many new programs and try new ideas for the first time. The network between community organizations and the school were not working in a collaborative manner. The task I was faced with included research and networking within the community to bring the school to a place where we were all working toward a common goal for our "at risk" students.

Diagnostic Testing

I have found many discrepancies in diagnostic testing in the resource area. The most predominant would have to be the accountability of learning styles in academic testing procedures. Many of the diagnostic tests that are used in determining grade levels, academic ability, and percentile ranks don't lend themselves to a tactile learner. Many of the students that I have tested scored poorly on these tests. But, they seem to score very well in the creative areas where visuals and manipulatives are used as measuring tools. I have one student, in particular, who amazes me when I look at his achievements on his diagnostic testing. He scored quite low on all composites except for one in the language arts area. When I read a passage to him, he could recall every detail of the passage right down to the smallest detail. He had an amazing ability to recall detail in a short passage and was able to comprehend all the meaning. But, if he was to read the passage himself, he would soon get lost in fighting his way through the reading and the mechanics of sentence structure and, thus, lose his ability to comprehend. For this student, he started to excel in his academic areas when we started providing him with material that complemented his unique learning style. If we had relied on achievement scores to determine his potential, we would never have seen the amazing potential that this boy holds. In working with him further, I now see him as gifted, rather than a low achiever.

There seems to be a definite pattern in the learning styles of the students at our school. All the students are from First Nations backgrounds. Most of the students that I work with have a predominant tactile and visual learning style. What I have done to compensate for this in the testing area is to use testing tools that center around a lot of visuals.

Individualized Programming

This area has been the most difficult in delivering programming to our "at risk" students. The majority of individualized programs I have developed are for children who have low academic ability and a variety of behavior disorders. It seems that behavior plays a significant role in how the students will achieve academically and also the type of learning style they have. Often these students excel best in an environment where they can use their hands and engage in an activity-based environment of learning. These types of activities seem to help them stay focused and keep their interest level heightened. Their energy level and level of excitement tip the top of the scale. It seems that their physical component is moving at a faster rate than their intellectual component. Our job in resource is to find materials that will compete with their heightened level of excitement. We have to somehow tie all the environmental and academic factors together to give the students an optimum learning experience.

The students with behavior disorders, that I program for, seem to experience difficulty in the classroom setting. There are many environmental factors that contribute to low achievement in the classroom setting. Working in a large group setting, these students seem to get quite distracted by the environment around them. The difficulty that faces First Nations Schools is that they are often left to face new challenges in the teaching areas alone. It is apparent in this school that new curriculum is a great challenge to implement. In the new language arts curriculum, there is a great deal of activity-based learning built in. This is to the "at risk" students' advantage. Much of the difficulty lies in the teacher. There hasn't been much in the way of professional development to help teachers develop their programs to deliver this type of learning environment. Much of the material used in the classrooms is outdated. Outside resources are not readily available to the school to bring them up to provincial levels. It takes a very "creative planner" to work with limited resources. I have found that a large part of my job has been to work with the teachers, rather than the students, to set up programs in their classroom that will accommodate the many different learning styles of children.

The following passage is an example of working with a teacher in the language arts area. He was very unclear on how to implement the new curriculum. Resources were not made available to him in the professional development area. When I mentioned the new curriculum to him, he had a look of panic on his face! He was reluctant to learn any of the new methods and strategies. I later realized that this reluctance was not because he did not want to learn, but, rather, was because he had been teaching the same way for so many years and with lack of exposure to newer versions of the curriculum, that he was somewhat apprehensive about his abilities. Once we sorted through his feelings towards change and I gave him reassurance that he was not alone in this, then he started becoming quite accepting of the changes, and even looked forward to trying out new strategies and ideas in his implementation of the curriculum.

School and Community: Working with Parents in Individualized Programming

This area of resource is probably the most challenging. There are so many environmental and social issues that come into play when dealing with "at risk" students in specialized programming in our school. There is a whole cultural and community dynamic that is part of how some students perceive the value of education through their community's eyes. I will review a case scenario that will help to explain some of the dynamics regarding dealing with an "at risk" student. This student comes from a single-parent family with his mother being very unstable and a victim to many social disorders that accompany the environment that she has no control over.

Case Study: "Ben"

Ben is an elementary school boy that has all the symptoms of a child with FAS. He also has speech difficulties that contribute to his low functioning. He was assessed by a psychologist and the results revealed that he is functioning as a 3 year, 2 monthaged child in most areas of development. He lacks most readiness skills and, socially, he remains at a toddler's stage in development. He has had many difficulties since he has entered the school system. He displays such behaviors as biting, kicking, hitting, throwing objects and swearing. He shows little remorse following any incidents involving hurting other students. He runs in and out of the classroom and has run outside the building on many occasions. His attention is extremely limited, and he finds it difficult to function in a group setting. There are many difficulties in trying to assist this child in developing a program that would accommodate some of these behaviors. His mother is very negative in her views on the school and education in general. Any type of intervention is usually not supported by her. She has a history of confronting the school staff in an aggressive manner, which leads to a dysfunctional relationship between the school and the home. There is a history of abuse in the family. There are many strategies we could implement for Ben in a behavior plan, but there is no follow-through with the mother in the home setting. She is very defensive whenever I have talked to her about Ben's behavior. If he shows problems in behavior, she blames the school or others involved. She is very much in denial that there are serious problems with Ben and is not equipped to deal with any of these issues.

I felt I had to somehow find out why this person was so negative when it comes to school issues. I started by arranging a visit with her in her home. When I got to her home, she was somewhat reluctant to talk to me. I started the conversation by using small talk and bringing some humor into the conversation. She seemed to feel more at ease with me once she realized that I was not a threat to her and that I was genuine in my concerns. We didn't talk much about Ben or any school issues. I left her home arranging another visit in a week's time.

When I went back for the second visit, she had coffee ready for me. She called me by my first name and was quite pleasant. She seemed to initiate the conversation telling me about some of her problems regarding her living situation. She mentioned that she is aware that there is "something wrong with Ben," but did not want to pursue that topic any further. She also disclosed that she does not like the school because they are too snoopy. I just listened to her without agreeing or disagreeing. I felt that any kind of communication with her was a breakthrough at this point. She told me of some of her own school experiences. That explained a lot to me as to how she perceives the education system. She was from a remote reserve and, at the time that she went to school, she had to be billeted out into a strange community to receive her high school credits. She ended up quitting after the first semester and going back home. She said the white students ignored her, and the white teachers picked on her. After this conversation, I arranged another visit to talk about what we can do to help Ben. She agreed to another visit and we said our goodbyes.

During the next visit, she seemed to be very willing to talk. We started to talk about Ben. She said that other kids pick on him and that is why he behaves the way he does. She said that she tells Ben to fight back. She also said that she is not proud of teaching him this, but, because this school doesn't care about the students anyway, you have to teach your kids to stick up for themselves. Again, I listened in a non-threatening manner. I told her that we could spend some time with Ben to teach him some ways to handle other students picking on him. I also brought up the subject of getting some extra help for him. She asked me if it would be me that worked with him. I felt that she had gained some trust in me by her comment. I assured her that I would be involved in giving Ben the assistance that he needed. I told her that I would keep in close contact with her when it concerns Ben. We talked about his speech problems and she gave me permission to seek a Speech/Language Pathologist to assess him and possibly work with him.

I learned a great deal from this experience. Since I have been at this school, I have experienced the negative tone by the community in regards to the institution. I now experienced first hand how that negative tone comes from the environment in which these students come from. This mother has a need to blame, because she is in a situation where her "motherhood" is in constant threat from her past experiences with abuse. It is much easier for her to blame than to accept responsibility. If she were to accept responsibility, how very frightening that would be for her, to see the situation her life is in. I could see the hurt in her eyes when she talked about Ben. It is no wonder, to me, that she does not want to deal with it. I felt, in this case, that we could not expect full participation on the mother's part in all issues concerning Ben, but we did have a line of communication that gave us a base to start with.

Conclusion

I think that, in order for the school to run effectively with a good line of support systems, the community itself has to take responsibility for their children's education, especially when there are a number of risk factors that effect education. The social diseases that infiltrate a community have to be addressed before the school can become a positive environment for the community. But these little steps we take to listen and provide support in a non-judgmental way are ways that we can make some small changes that do make a difference in our quest to deliver a good education.

Resource programming has many challenges in this community. There is a history of mistrust in the education system that is very evident, even today. "Extra help" is often seen as threatening, which makes the challenge even greater. This mistrust is validated at times when you look at some of the testing materials being used that are not culturally sensitive. It is also validated when some of the curriculum materials are not relevant to First Nations communities. Again, it is also valid when funding and resources are not made available to First Nations schools as they are in the public schools. But changes are coming as seen in the new Aboriginal Resource Center that has just been established in Manitoba to address some of the school issues such as Speech/Language Pathologists, Psychologists, Behavior Specialists, and other services that will be provided for First Nations schools.

In conclusion, it is necessary to look at all students as individuals with individual needs and circumstances. The school needs to be a place where they accept, accommodate and respond to students in a manner that enables their maximum social, emotional and intellectual growth. As concluded from this study, one key area in achieving school success is to build community relations and work in a holistic manner when dealing with "at risk" students.

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How Plants can be Used in the Classroom

Natalie Tays

Long ago, the classroom used to be all of the great outdoors and the teachers were the elders. What they knew about plants they would teach to their children. A lot of the knowledge about plants has been passed on from one generation to the next. Nothing was ever recorded on paper; it was kept in the memories of people. Today, however, we have cassette recorders, movie cameras, and photographs to help us preserve and store knowledge. The work I did with the Brandon University Botany Department helped me realize the great need for resource material that can be used in the classroom. I did two years of research interviewing different elders on their knowledge of plants and how they are used. I realized the importance of preserving the teachings of elders so that their knowledge is not lost, and how to incorporate their teachings into the classroom.

How plants can be used in the classroom as part of the Science Curriculum

- Research uses and names of local plants
- Hands on classroom activities using the local plants
- Teach students local folklore on the plants and their origins
- Teach students Native rituals and practices
- Teach students conservation and preservation of plants
- Teach students how to survive in the woods by living off the land
- Teach students how to use the great outdoors for first aid supplies.

Research

(Grade 8) This can be modified to a lower grade:

- Students could interview their parents and grandparents and ask what they know about plants, then present their findings to the class.
- Plant identification – going on a field trip and identifying local plants. This can be done with the help of an elder. This will help the student see what the plants look like and where they grow.

- Collecting plant specimens and learning the local (Cree) name, scientific and latin name.

Hands on Activities

Can be done in any grade level:

Collecting local berries, example, *Strawberries* – they taste great! The berries can be made into a jam; and, note they can also be used as medicine. To the Cree People, this berry is called Otihiminah (meaning heart medicine), Latin name is Fragaria virginiana. The berries could be picked and made into a jam. The whole plant was used by the Cree people as a heart medicine, thus the name.

Make juice the old-fashioned way – Long ago, the elders didn't have Tang or Kool Aid; they had a plant called Fire Weed (the English name) known in Cree as Akapuskwah, and in Latin Epilobium angustifolium. This plant can be picked and eaten if someone gets hungry. It can also be soaked in water, drained and drank as juice with a little bit of sugar added. The children will enjoy this very much. Interesting facts about Fire Weed - elders use this plant to help them determine when to hunt Moose. When the flowers are in full bloom, this tells the elders that the Moose are fat enough to hunt.

Learn how plants can be used for medicines – example *Spruce Gum* from the *sap of the spruce tree*. Spruce Tree Gum is known in Cree as Mistikopiki and, in Latin, as Picea mariana. The spruce tree is very common in most parts of Manitoba; the Cree people long ago used to chew the gum for endurance. It also cleans out the stomach while it is being chewed. The gum was also enjoyed by children as candy. The sap can also be made into an ointment to treat infections.

Make birch bark canoes and baskets – *White Birch Bark*, known in Cree as Waskwah; Latin name Betula papyrifera. Students can be taught that, long ago, people used to use bark for a number of things such as casts for a broken arm or leg. In the spring, the liquid sap was collected by placing a small stick inserted into the tree and a bucket was hung to collect it. Also some elders used to use the outer bark to make tea. Birch bark baskets, canoes, and net menders can be made by using bark and branches from a *Red-Osier Dogwood*, the Cree name is Mikobimaka (means red); Latin name is Cornus stolonifera.

Leaf Art – leaves can be collected by the students in the fall and interesting art work can be created. All you would need is leaves, paper, glue and some imagination.

Other Classroom Activities

Learn local folklore about the plants and their origins from the local elders – by inviting the elders into the classroom, you are using local resource people who know the area and the stories. Example of one such story is about the "CONK OF WOOD ROTTING FUNGUS" – Cree name Posakan, Latin name Inonotus obliquuus. The fungus can be found on white birch trees. This fungus can be used as a fire starter; long ago, people used to burn this fungus and carry it from camp to camp. It is said that it is almost like coal, once it starts burning, it does not go out until it burns itself out. It can also be boiled and made into a tea.

There is a story that some elders tell about how this fungus originated; it is a story that has been passed down from one generation to the next. The Posakan is also known as Wisakigak's omiki (Wisakigak is a mythic Cree character) meaning it is the scab of Wisakigak. The legend goes like this: one day Wisakigak was wandering around aimlessly in pain and hungry. Wisakigak is always hungry. He was so hungry he didn't notice that he was walking in circles. Now he had a scab on his butt (how he got the scab is another story) because he walked so much the scab fell off. So he came upon his scab thinking, "Oh! I found some dried meat," and he started yelling "Granny! Granny! You dropped your dried meat." So when granny didn't answer, he ate some of it. While he was doing this, some birds were watching him. They started laughing and teasing him, singing "Wisakigak ate his scab! Wisakigak ate his scab!" over and over again. Well, this made Wisakigak very mad, so he threw it against a white birch tree; there it stayed and, today, we know it as posakan.

Students can be taught to respect Native rituals. I found in my research that it is very important that respect is shown to the elder that is teaching you and to the plants being collected. Respect is shown by offering tobacco or food to the elder for their knowledge and time. Also, respect for the plant is shown by burying tobacco in the spot where you are collecting. There is a saying among the elders that if you take a plant and do not offer anything in return, you will most likely have a nasty accident in your bed during the night. Some elders say you don't have to offer tobacco, you can offer anything such as spoons, forks, useful things. This is your way of saying Thanks.

Teach students conservation and preservation of plants (good activity for Earth Day). Students can be taught how Native people practice conservation and preservation of plants. According to every elder that I've interviewed, they say it is important to respect the land; for we depend and live off it, in order for the land to continue feeding us and helping us to survive. Native people practice conservation by taking only what they need, paying respect, and leaving the rest. A motto to teach the students on conservation of plants is **"take what you need, pay respect, and leave the rest**." To take too much would be a waste. Students can come up with their own neat mottos to design into posters (good activity for Earth Day).

Another good Earth Day activity could be planting trees around the school or in the community. You could phone Natural Resources about trees to plant.

Students can be taught how to survive in the woods using only what nature has to provide. This could be an over-night field trip, along with an elder to show them how to start a fire without matches, make tea, make a shelter, and find food. Students would enjoy this outing.

Dying Clothes using the leaves of a *Red-Osier Dogwood.* The willow is picked, peeled and then boiled in a large bucket. You take whatever it is you want to dye and soak it in the water. It will come out red. A little note - the Red-Osier Dogwood, when boiled, is said to be good for sore eyes and can be used as an eye drop.

Make some Labrador Tea – *Common Labrador Tea*, known in Cree as Mokopukwatikwah, Latin name Ledum groenlandicum. It can be picked, cleaned, boiled and drank as a tea. Note – this is the secret plant used by native men to prevent baldness.

Teach Students to use the Outdoors for First Aid Supplies

How to treat the following:

Bee stings or insect bites – take and chew on the *leaves of Poplar or Aspen Trees*, then apply it directly to the sting for fast relief.

Fracture or broken bone – use the *bark of a White Birch* as a cast, wrap it around the injured limb to prevent further injury.

Upset stomach – *Cranberries*, known in Cree as Wisukimina, Latin name Vaccinium vitisidaea. The berries also clean out your stomach when eaten.

Treat cuts – to treat cuts deep or small, *Puff Balls*, Cree name Bipogithamin, Latin name Lycoperdon, can be used. They are found in a mossy area. The Puff Ball is applied directly to the cut.

Minor cuts – use the plant *Wild Lily of the Valley* (Cree name Soskopukwah); the leaf is collected and dried. After it is dried, it is applied directly to the cut and wrapped with a cloth. When this plant is boiled, it is known as the Cree Iodine.

Headaches - *Common Yarrow*, Cree name Miskigonimaskigah (means headache medicine), Latin name Achillea millefolium. The flower is picked in the summer and when someone has a headache, they just have to put the flower near your nose and the fragrance from the flower will take away the pain.

Plants are so important to humans and animals; they can be used in countless ways as a teaching tool in educating students. Nature should be used, respected, admired and conserved. The research that I did for Brandon University helped me learn how important it is to preserve the knowledge and to pass it on to others on how plants can be used for medicine, crafts, foods, or just for admiring. There are countless ways you can use plants in the classroom, but are too numerous to mention. I mentioned a few ways you could use plants in the classroom. What I learned as most important is to use the local elders and people in the community as your resources. Bring them into the classroom; it takes more than one person to educate a child. This research I found was very valuable in preserving the knowledge of the Nisichiwasihk First Nation Elders (Nelson House) and I thank them for helping expand my knowledge of plants.

The Preservation of Traditional Plant Lore

Robin J. Marles

Introduction

Canada's boreal forest has been, for a long time, a very important source of natural resources. Originally, it was important for subsistence activities such as hunting meat and gathering foods such as fruit, vegetables, and beverage plants, medicinal plants, and materials for technology and rituals. More recently, northern natural resources have been harvested for economic purposes. This started with snaring and trapping for the fur trade and then logging, which focused originally on softwoods such as white spruce, but now encompasses hardwoods such as aspen too. As economic exploitation of the northern forest expands, serious questions have arisen as to the sustainability of these industries.

Perceptions of the Boreal Forest

Sustainability was not considered an issue in the past, due to the perception that the boreal forest was an almost endless expanse of trees and muskeg. Indeed, half of Canada is covered by forests, representing 10% of the entire world's forests. However, Canada harvests close to one million hectares of forest per year, which could be compared to Brazil's deforestation rate of 1.4 million hectares per year. Most of the southern boreal forest is already subject to forest tenures held by private companies for logging, and the northern half is labelled on this map from the publication "The State of Canada's Environment" as the "non-productive boreal forest."

The federal and provincial Forest Services and forest industry are now looking for ways to diversify the forest industry, including the gathering of "non-timber forest products." These non-timber forest plants can benefit Canadian agriculture too, through crop diversification such as the cultivation of ginseng, a forest species, under shade structures. Farm diversification is an essential strategy to reverse the high rate of farm bankruptcies, which have increased 1000% over the last 20 years, especially (70%) on the prairies.

The Human Factor

First Nations peoples living in northern Canada possess a wealth of knowledge about edible plants growing there. There are both humanitarian and financial reasons why we should learn from them. The ultimate humanitarian goal of the Functional Food Industry is to help consumers achieve and maintain good health. Good health depends on the interaction between four key factors:

- Clean water
- A healthy lifestyle
- Proper nutrition
- Adequate professional health care

Many northern communities are accessible only by poor roads or just ice roads in winter, boats in summer, or air year-round. Isolation may result in a lack of employment opportunities and unequal access to health care. Poverty and despair are key factors in the poor sanitation facilities affecting water quality, social disruption affecting lifestyle, and improper eating habits leading to malnutrition.

Government-sponsored attempts to solve the problems of poor eating habits and malnutrition have included several approaches:

- Flying in produce from southern communities, which results in high costs to consumers and low quality of produce due to extended shipping and handling;
- Introducing small-scale agriculture, kitchen gardens and greenhouses, which may be difficult to establish and maintain in remote communities, and which may also fail because inhabitants have no tradition of, nor interest in, agriculture;
- Education based on a paradigm foreign to aboriginal culture;
- Inadequate communication with northern residents as to what types of assistance they desire may predestine many aid ventures to failure.

Importation of food and introduction of agriculture into the north have been the only practical solutions enacted to date in part due to the perception of non-residents that local natural resources are inadequate. The boreal forest is perceived as a vast expanse of dark forest and muskeg frozen for more than half of the year while the surrounding grounds are perceived as being "barren." Primary biological productivity is indeed lower in the north than in other regions of Canada but, nevertheless, the land supports a diverse flora and fauna. First Nations peoples have lived well off these resources for thousands of years.

Official government maps label much of the north as "non-productive" boreal forest. Much of the "productive" boreal forest is already subject to forest tenures granted to private companies for logging. Questions regarding long-term sustainability of current forest industry practices have led to increasing interest in "non-timber forest resources" as a means for forest industry diversification. There is also some potential for agricultural diversification through cultivation of northern plants, with special techniques, if necessary, such as providing shade for forest species like American ginseng. Diversification of the forest and farm industries will provide greater economic stability to these two pillars of the Canadian economy, and the participation of the northern First Nations peoples in functional food and phytochemical nutraceutical crop development will create greater economic opportunities for their communities.

Boreal Ethnobotany

The best source of information on potentially useful native plants is the knowledge of First Nations elders, who have a long tradition of plant use. With the economic justification of diversification of the forestry and agricultural industries, funding was obtained from the Canadian Forest Service to conduct extensive ethnobotanical field research across the central boreal forest region. A key aspect of this research is that it has involved First Nations communities in every stage, from planning to conducting field interviews, collecting and identifying plant specimens, and analyzing the results. The information to follow is based on interviews with over 100 Cree, Dene, and Metis elders in 29 different communities across the north.

Traditional Uses for Plants in a Modern Context

Information was gathered on many aspects of the relationship between the First Nations peoples and their plant environment.

Technological uses include the use of birch bark to construct baskets, moose callers, and many other implements. Birch wood was carved and shaped to make snowshoe frames.

Food plants include many types of fruit such as cloudberries, blueberries, and cranberries, shoots of cattails, bulrushes, and reeds, and the inner bark of birch, aspen and pine. One "modern" buzzword is "Functional Food," the definition of which is adopted from the Health Canada Discussion Document on Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals (1997). Characteristics of a Functional Food:

- Similar in appearance to conventional foods
- Consumed as a part of a usual diet

- Demonstrated to have physiological benefits beyond basic nutritional functions, or
- Reduces the risk of chronic disease

First Nations elders have long explicitly recognized the connection between consumption of bush food and the maintenance of good health, so this is not a new concept to them. One example of a "functional food" from Canada's north is the cranberry, known to treat or help prevent urinary tract infections due to its content of fructose and other high-molecular-weight compounds that prevent bacteria from adhering to the urinary tract epithelium.

Another modern buzzword is "nutraceutical," which is defined by the Health Canada Discussion Document on Function Foods and Nutraceuticals (1997), as having the following distinguishing characteristics:

- Produced from a food
- Sold in pills, powders or other medicinal forms
- Demonstrated physiological benefits beyond basic nutritional functions, or
- Reduces the risk of chronic disease

Most traditional foods do not fit in this category, with the possible exception of mineral salts extracted from red samphire by boiling and evaporation, and used by the Shoal Lake, SK, Cree to season food. This basic salt would provide trace minerals which act as enzyme co-factors critical for the maintenance of good health. Consumption of small amounts of chromium, manganese, and magnesium salts has been shown to be beneficial in the treatment of non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus.

There are many classes of "nutraceutical" compounds in traditional bush foods with known health benefits. The presence of these types of compounds in traditional fruits (e.g. blueberries), roots (e.g. cattail rhizomes), and shoots (e.g. fireweed) makes these foods "functional." These compounds are often present in higher amounts in wild plants than in cultivated species which have been bred for mild flavour, e.g. carotenoids and xanthophylls are readily visible in wild vegetable leaves such as fireweed after loss of the chlorophyll.

Commercialization has already occurred for some nutraceuticals such as pycnogenol, a proanthocyanidin complex reputedly antioxidant and reducing blood capillary fragility.

"Cosmeceuticals" are compounds present in cosmetics which have a pharmaceutical effect, such as to improve skin texture, stimulate wound healing, control hair growth, regulate skin pigmentation, reduce inflammation, or reduce irritation, e.g.

stinging, burning, and itching. Examples of plants with cosmeceutical potential include yarrow which contains anti-inflammatory terpenoids and fireweed which is under development by Saskatoon Fytochem Company as an anti-inflammatory due to its flavonoid glycoside content.

Pharmaceuticals have an excellent track record for economic development: over three-quarters of the more than 120 plant-derived drugs currently on the market were discovered through scientific investigation of traditional uses. Estimates of the current North American market value for natural products varies from $5 billion to $250 billion, depending on how strictly these products are defined. More than 130 native or naturalized species of plants were identified in our study as having traditional medicinal uses.

Medicinal plants are often used in combinations, but the elders have asked us to keep the formulas confidential to protect their intellectual property rights. We have their permission to describe and evaluate uses of certain individual plants in order to validate traditional knowledge. For example, rat root, *Acorus americanus* (Raf.) Raf., Acoraceae, rhizome for colds, upset stomach, pain (rheumatism, head, etc.), diabetes, or yellow pond lily, *Nuphar lutea* (L.) Sm., Nymphaeaceae, rhizome for arthritis, sores, diabetic ulcers, heart trouble, childbirth recovery. Bearberry or Uva Ursi is now being sold as a registered diuretic drug (despite the red maple leaf on the label, it is imported from the US), in a new drug class known as "Traditional Herbal Medicines."

Health Canada established this separate category of non-prescription drugs for the marketing of products often previously sold as dietary supplements, but for which there are references supporting therapeutic use. Key aspects of the definition of a Traditional Herbal Medicine are:

- Finished drug products
- Intended for self-medication
- Intended for minor self-limiting ailments suitable for self-treatment
- Active ingredients are herbal
- Limited scientific documentation
- Well-documented traditional use

Sustainability

Now that we have identified a significant number of potentially useful plants from the boreal forest, we must determine if they can be developed in a sustainable manner. Sustainable development should be viewed as an ecological, economic, and cultural concept.

Ecological Sustainability

Most ecologists would agree that large-scale clear-cut logging is not ecologically sustainable. Alternative strategies such as selective logging, combined with the harvest of non-timber forest products, could allow the same economic return per hectare with fewer trees cut, making the industry more sustainable. Conversely (or perhaps I should say perversely), some companies are sending in gatherers for the non-timber products and then clear-cutting, which maximizes the dollars extracted per hectare, but is less ecologically sustainable. Information can always be used for either good or bad purposes. Most non-timber native plants, such as senega snakeroot, cannot be sustainably wildcrafted due to the quantities needed for commerce and, in many localities, particular species have already become endangered or extirpated.

Although biological productivity in the north is relatively low, small-scale agriculture with ameliorative techniques such as raised beds or cold-frames can prove successful. Developing native species into new crops presents a unique set of agronomic challenges for cultivation, pest control, harvesting, and preparation for market but, for many of our economic native plants, selection of appropriate varieties and large-scale agricultural production will be the most viable option for a sustainable harvest.

Economic Sustainability

With respect to economic sustainability, Canada has a long history as a major supplier to the world of raw materials, which we export and then buy back as finished products. This trend has carried over into medicinal plant crops such as ginseng, which is sold in bulk through brokers to Asian markets. Much more effort must be made to develop value-added products, particularly if rural communities are to achieve the maximum benefit from new medicinal crops. Target markets must be clearly identified and stringent quality controls established to ensure commercial viability.

Cultural Sustainability

Regarding cultural sustainability, development should be consistent with local community needs and desires, not just demands of the global market. Among aboriginal people of all ages participating in this study, there was no consensus on the desirability of economic development of plant products. Concern was expressed that pharmaceutical companies might profit from the development of medicines based on traditional remedies without any recognition or financial compensation for those providing the information, raising the issue of protection of intellectual property rights. These issues must be dealt with fairly to ensure sustained involvement of the community in development projects. Direct involvement of community members in the research and development process empowers them to find the solutions they need. Involving aboriginal youth in the research helps to disseminate traditional knowledge, ensuring that these traditions will be sustained from one generation to the next.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the team-work approach of aboriginal researchers, community elders, scientists, foresters, agronomists, and marketers for the discovery and assessment of potential new plant products promises to be a successful paradigm for northern economic development. However, much work remains to turn our well-intentioned dreams of commercial boreal medicinal plant products into a truly sustainable reality. We need to listen to the "Voice of the Drum," that is, listen to the knowledge of the elders to learn how best to handle the potential of traditionally used plants to help people today.

Addendum

The Protection of Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights: A Bibliography

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Ten Years after "Cross Lake Education Authority Local Control of Indian Education ..."

Rebecca A. Ross

Introduction

Any issue in a First Nations community is likely to be somewhat different than that of the general Canadian population. Important differences arise from the historical experience of the First Nations people. First Nations people have been subjected to a common colonial experience. They have experienced such things as loss of viable economic activity, loss of language and culture, loss of self-government, the residential school experience, the experience of a reservation life, poverty and racism. First Nations communities are also unique in that they are serviced differently in health and education than any other Canadian community. Our schools have failed to nurture the intellectual development and academic performance of many First Nations children, as evident from their school dropout rates and negative attitudes towards school (Indian Nations at Risk Task Force Report, 1991).

Our First Nations students are straddling between the world of tradition and that of economics, which is fast-paced, competitive and a forever-changing environment. The exterior powerful forces send conflicting messages to these students. Thus, they are caught up with the negative forces that prevent them from getting that intellectual development and academic learning. Before any successful school change can happen, an attempt has to be made to address the historical experiences mentioned above.

Historical Shifts in Education

Prior to European contact, traditional Indian Education in Manitoba, as among all Indian Bands or groups across Canada, was an all-encompassing life-long process and was integrated into the social and political structure of Indian communities. The function of traditional education was to pass on knowledge from one generation to the next to ensure cultural continuity. Training for boys and girls in preparation for adulthood was very important. They were provided with the life skills necessary for their future roles in society as well-prepared, self-sustaining persons who could contribute to the life of the family, the band, and the nation. During this period of history of Indian Education in the traditional economic region, which is now Manitoba, the training of Indian children was designed, planned and implemented by Indian leaders, elders and parents in preparing their children for the environment in which they were to live.

When vigorous missionary activity began in what is now Manitoba, in around the year 1812, the traditional Indian system of learning began to experience a radical external challenge. Early missionaries served as settlement government factors where laws and political legislation did not have a strong influence. Besides having a central communication role in early settlements, the missionaries' vision for educating the Indian was based on Christianity as the only road to "civilization." For the most part, instruction was conducted in the Indian community. Indian parents were still able to resist the externally imposed and culturally biased education of their children. They continued to influence their children through language and culture.

In 1867, The British Parliament adopted the *British North American Act* (BNA) giving the Canadian Parliament the authority for self-government. In Section 9 of the BNA, the Federal Government of Canada was assigned the responsibility for Indians and Indian lands. The *Indian Act* defined the administrative relationship between the Federal Government and the Indian people. Treaty 5, affecting northern Manitoba and other treaties, which were subsequently signed with Indians of Manitoba and Western Canada, committed the Federal Government to provide educational services and facilities on reserves. The terms of the treaties constitute what the Indians considered as a binding and inviolable statutory commitment by the Federal Government to provide universal free education to Indian people. The Federal Government chose to continue to delegate the responsibility for Indian Education to the missionaries and churches.

In order to combat the resistance the Indian parents and children made to this assimilation, the Federal Government made a serious and vigorous attempt to absorb the Indian child into the mainstream's perception of life. This was done through removing Indian children from their home environment and parental influence by placing them in Industrial Schools, the forerunners of Residential Schools, for ten months of the year. This practice lasted for over fifty years and most seriously eroded parental control of education, and had many devastating repercussions for the Indian family structure.

The curriculum of early Industrial Schools in Manitoba and across Canada was influenced by the American Industrial School System, which was based on a half-day plan. The first half-day was devoted to academics and the second half-day on industrial training since relative economic self-sufficiency of the school was stressed. The Industrial Schools were eventually replaced by Residential Schools after a Federal government Order-in-Council in 1892.

Residential Schools followed the philosophy and operation of Industrial Schools. Their principal purpose was to isolate the students from their environments so as to reduce cultural and parental influences and to assimilate the Indian child into the Canadian homogeneous concepts. The hardships encountered by students on Industrial and Residential Schools have already been solidly documented, ranging from emotional isolation, high incidences of epidemics, strict discipline and punishment, especially regarding the prohibition of speaking the native language, and sexual abuse. It should be noted that, although many Indian children attended Industrial and Residential Schools, such educational practices were not universal and the operation of Indian day schools on reserves persisted during this era.

Most Recent Education System

Generally, Indians in Manitoba attended three different types of school systems: Federal, Provincial, and Band-operated schools. From among these school systems, it is clear that there were wide disparities in resources and wide variations in the quality of programming, community supports and student performance. The following depressing evidence is, in large measure, due to outside control, geographic isolation, effects of cultural assimilation, and limited education programs affording the needs of Indian students:

- More than 97 percent do not graduate and are slotted into a lifetime of poverty.
- Dropout rates rise significantly after elementary school, and did not show any marked decrease since 1978.
- Over 90 percent of pupils attending northern Manitoba reserves come from homes where English is the second language and there are no mechanisms that specifically address the language needs of Indian children attending these schools. In spite of the continuing absence of adapted school programs that

meet Indian cultural needs, the Federal Government has made a strong commitment to language programs for Anglophones, Francophones and recent immigrants.

- Native Studies, or the support of cultural identity, through the native language, legends, arts, and community activities, rest upon the efforts of few individual teachers who receive few, if any, supports.
- Inadequate manpower on northern reserves cannot manage an Indian educational system with its own unique needs; elders and other eminent local resources are removed from the Indian children's educational systems, and local teachers do not have the authority to employ them.

Cross Lake Community Profile

Cross Lake is located approximately 520 air kilometres north of Winnipeg along the shores of the Nelson River, and 130 air kilometres south of Thompson. The community consists of the Community Council (non-status/Metis) and the Cross Lake First Nation (status). Cross Lake First Nation Reservation is one of the fastest growing progressive reservations in Manitoba. Cross Lake has had a significant population increase and has the largest youth population in all the 63 First Nations in Manitoba. Cross Lake Education Authority's school teaching staff is 80% Aboriginal. Cross Lake is also in the process of establishing a regionalized campus with Keewatin Community College offering various community-based programs. Cross Lake First Nation is a signatory to Treaty 5 signed in 1875. The language of the people is Cree. Cross Lake First Nation is one of the five bands covered by the provision of the Northern Flood Agreement. Cross Lake First Nation Reservation has been devastated by the Manitoba Hydro's Jenpeg Power Dam and Lake Winnipeg Control Structure located 15 kilometres upstream from the reserve. The population of the Cross Lake on-reserve is approximately 3,483 and the total population including off-reserve is 5,255.

For the community services, Cross Lake First Nation has its own fire department and police protection; Cross Lake has the R.C.M.P. detachment with five officers and five First Nations constables. Health care services are also available; Cross Lake Nursing Station has 5-6 nurses and three doctors on rotation. Dental care is also available all year round. The nearest hospital is Thompson General Hospital.

The infrastructure of the Cross Lake First Nation community is not lacking. Electrical service is provided by landline from the Jenpeg Power Dam. For water supply, part of the community is serviced by main line piping and the rest by holding tanks.

The Cross Lake First Nation community is accessible by land and air. There are two daily flights to Cross Lake from Winnipeg. There are also two flights from Cross Lake to Thompson. There is an all-weather road from Provincial Road No. 373 with one short ferry/winter road crossing at Pipestone Lake. The Grey Goose Buslines also makes a daily run to Cross Lake. Most of the community roads are paved.

The resource, economic and employment development of the Cross Lake First Nation community varies. The three main traditional lifestyles were trapping, hunting and commercial fishing. The Cross Lake First Nation and Cross Lake Education Authority are the largest employers.

Cross Lake First Nation has their own communications systems; they operate a local radio station, C.F.N.C., and a 16 Multichannel Television Station is in place for cable subscription. Full telephone service has been in place for the last decade. The commercial business and services of the community have been very progressive. Many of the local community members have their own businesses as in a local airline, hair salon, restaurants, gas stations, plumbing and electrical services, to name a few. The two major stores are I.G.A. and the Northern Store. There are two restaurants and one motel. There are other services, too numerous to mention.

Cross Lake Education Authority

A. Philosophy of Cross Lake Education Authority

The philosophy of the Cross Lake Education Authority is that education is a blend of culture, tradition and technology. Education is an on-going process which begins with the parents and, later, school programs are an extension of this family-shared education. Our children are educated so that, through respect for personal freedom, they will learn all they need to know in order to be active participants of their world and to lead a good life. Strength, wisdom, courage, and vision results in:

- Pride in one's self
- Understanding one's fellow-persons
- Living in harmony with nature

Our education must respect and encompass our language, our history, our land, nature and all our resources. Our school must be holistic and realistic in outlook. It must relate not only to academic development, but also our spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical growth. All activities of the school should be determined in the light of how they affect the child's education and training.

B. **Schools**

Cross Lake Education Authority is very large and a more complex organization. As per school board direction, the two schools – Otter Nelson River School and Mikisew Middle School - have to operate under the same policies of the Cross Lake Education Authority. Otter Nelson River School offers K-4 and Senior I to Senior IV, and Mikisew Middle School from 5-8. Each school operates with its own administration. Otter Nelson River School has 62 staff members: three administrators, teachers and other support staff. At Mikisew Middle School, there are 35 staff members: two administrators, teachers and other support staff.

C. Vision Statement of Cross Lake Education Schools

The vision statement of Cross Lake Education Authority schools reads:

The Cross Lake Education Authority believes all community members have the right to the highest quality of education.

It is their mandate to provide a culturally relevant education in a safe, caring environment which will enable students to acquire the necessary skills to meet the challenges of life and make a positive contribution to society.

D. Goals of Cross Lake Education Authority Schools

- Provide a safe learning and teaching environment for students and staff.
- Provide an educational environment that will enable all students to develop the academic skills and apply them to everyday challenges.
- Promote communication, teamwork and support between the home, school and community.
- Promotion of emotional well-being of students and staff to ensure a positive learning environment is achieved.

The vision statement was developed by the school staff and some parents. "Vision is defined as an agreement, explicitly stated in some form, shared by a significant number of participants in an organizational unit, on a mixture of values, beliefs, purposes, and goals that serves to provide a clear reference point for members of the organizational unit to use when making decisions about their behaviour in the organizational context. This vision must be clear enough to enable participants to make choices that help move the organization toward achievement of the general values, beliefs, purposes, or goals" (Conley, 1997, p. 427). The staff and parents sat together to readdress the "vision statement" and "goals."

Organizational Staff/Team

The organization of the Cross Lake Education Authority is led by the seven member school board who are elected at staggered elections every two years. The two schools are unique in their own way, as the majority of each school staff is Aboriginal and there is a focus of implementing culturally relevant programs. In a recent review of Cross Lake Education Authority staff, 80% are Aboriginal and are qualified teachers.

The parental involvement in the schools is great, and both schools like to receive parents at all times. In the last several years, the parents of the community have become more involved and responsible for school developments.

The other component of the school organization is the involvement of the elders. Elders can be part of the school organization and certainly both schools have welcomed the elders. The elders have to be reconnected to the younger generation of the community. The younger generation needs to hear the stories of their peoples' histories.

A. Parents and Community Involvement

No school is likely to be successful without the inclusion of the parents and community. Otter Nelson River School has been fortunate to have the on-going participation and support from the parents and community resource people. Increased involvement of parents and community is often cited as one of the most important ways to improve public schools. A number of studies (Henderson & Berta, 1994) confirm that parent involvement makes an enormous impact on students' attitudes, attendance and academic achievement.

Comer and Haynes (1992) describe five guiding principles for involving parents in schools.

1. A no-fault approach, focusing not on who is to blame, but on what can be done.
2. Co-ordination and co-operation among all adults concerned with the child's best educational interests.
3. Decision by consensus whenever possible.
4. Regular meetings representing the entire school community.
5. Active involvement of parents.

These guiding principles are precise and more appropriate for the development of a successful school, and I would recommend that these guiding principles be followed.

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As parents and community members, one of the greatest responsibilities we have is to educate our children. As the proverb goes, "it takes an entire village to raise a child." Perhaps there is no greater duty for the village than to make sure its children gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed as adults and contribute to their community. It surprised me to find this proverb, as it is the same proverb of the First Nations people. Yet, the parents and community have little control of how their children are educated. Parents and communities are not given the tools or the authority to make decisions to make sure their children are succeeding in schools. Power and control over the education of the children rests in government policies. Changes need to be made to put the power back into the hands of parents, school boards, and classroom teachers.

Trust needs to be put back into the "village," empowering the parents and communities to decide what is best for their children's education - we need to trust the parents. We need to restore some common sense to our education system, and that begins with returning power to parents and communities. We need to return power to the village, so its people can properly raise their children (Thompson, 1995).

B. Role of Elders

The elders are the completion of the life cycle displayed in the medicine wheel. The elders have always played a central role in First Nations education. Elders are the keepers of tradition, guardians of culture, the wisdom keepers, and the teachers. Elders are highly respected in the First Nations circles.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report (1996) states that:

- Elders be reinstated to an active role in the education of Aboriginal children and youth in education systems under Aboriginal control and in provincial and territorial schools.
- Provincial and territorial education ministries, boards of education and educators recognize the value of elders' and peoples' understanding of the universe by:
- collaborating with elders to determine how traditional Aboriginal knowledge can be made accessible in the education of all students, whether Aboriginal institutions are under Aboriginal, provincial or territorial control (p. 525).

Key Characteristics of the Schools

Cross Lake Education Authority schools have made headway in their education system. They have implemented many unique programs in their school organization. Some of the key characteristics of the schools are:

- as stated earlier, there are a large number of Aboriginal teachers. Not only are many of the teaching staff Aboriginal, these teachers are fully qualified and some are trained in specialized areas: home economics, industrial arts, computers, special education, counselling, administration and early years;
- the school and community still maintain their language and the children in the schools are fluent in their Cree Language;
- the school offers cultural programming as in teaching the Cree Language and First Nations Studies from pre-school to senior years. Five staff persons work in the area of cultural programming;
- a mature student program is in place to welcome those students who have dropped out of school and are prepared to re-enter school;
- a co-operative program is offered to meet the needs of the students who are academically delayed as a result of certain social conditions, but still want to be educated. The program also includes work experience with community businesses;
- A Wilderness Camp is incorporated into the outdoor education. First Nations Studies and Science programs are in place and the students are transported to this camp and some classes camp out there;
- the governance system of the community, which is Chief and Council, works effectively with the Cross Lake Education Authority School Board. These two organizations have established a clear understanding and mutual respect between them; and
- the school organizations are non-unionized; our leadership believes that unions have no place in local band governments.

In-school and Community Programs

A. First Nations Language Program

In 1971, the Manitoba Native Bilingual Program was developed in Manitoba. Five communities were involved in the program. The five communities were Nelson House, Wasagamach, St. Theresa Point, Pelican Rapids, and Cross Lake. Before the 1970's, a survey was conducted and showed that 50% of the Native children entering school in Manitoba knew their Native language. It was about that time when the Native people began the movement of taking control of their education.

Cross Lake led the way in the Native language education and many other communities modelled their programs after the Manitoba Native Bilingual Program. The community was involved: the elders telling the stories, artists doing the illustrations of the teaching aids, and parents assisting the teachers. It was absolutely necessary for everyone to know about the program. Everyone was informed about the (1) background, (2) the rationale, and (3) the objectives. The program needed all the support. The program promoted the need for training Native teachers. The success of the program rests on the teachers; every teacher must support the program. It was important to know that knowing your own language first means that you are more readily able to learn the second language. This has been proven by research. It is a fact that the best way to teach anyone to learn a second language is to start children in their own language first. After starting children in their own language, English should be gradually introduced to them. It was a fact that many children came to school with the knowledge of their own language and, upon encountering a non-Native teacher, they were immediately alienated from the classroom. The children became frustrated. This was even more evident when children of five or six years entered school.

The emphasis of the program is the language and culture. Because language is the basis of a culture, losing a language is to lose one's culture. Many Native languages across the country are at the verge of extinction. In Cross Lake, the bilingual program was implemented in the school, and it was found that the children's attendance was then better. Having Native teachers in the school made the students more comfortable. The teachers knew the children's community, the culture, and values of the people. When children came to pre-school, they were so busy learning the English language that all other learning was stifled.

A program was developed to teach English as a second language from kindergarten to the third grade. In Kindergarten I – 80-100% of the Native language was taught with 0-20% of English being taught; Kindergarten II – 60-80% Native language and 20-40% English; Grade 1 – 40-60% Native language and 40-60% English; Grade 2 – 20-40% Native language and 60-80% English; and Grade 3 – 0-20% Native language and 80%-100% English. This rationale was set up to design a language shift. The shift is from the Native language to English.

This program was in the school for ten years and was lost after some parents and teachers felt that the teaching of the language was not that important. However, the results had been evident for there had been an increasing number of high school graduates. The students were highly fluent in their language and other non-Native students who attended our school learned to speak the language. Today, we have one non-Native teacher who has grown up in Cross Lake and went through the program. She used it in teaching the primary grades and is very fluent in our language. She can relate to her students and knows her students' background.

B. First Nations Studies Program

In September 1990, the First Nations Studies Program was implemented from Grades 1 – 10. The Native Studies Program was planned by the teachers involved. After a year of the program, there was a change in the teachers. Again, the program was planned by the teachers involved. It was not until January 1992 that a consultant was hired on a contract basis to work with the First Nations Studies Program Committee. The Committee was composed of elders, parents, school board, school administration, teachers and board administration. The main objective was to develop a First Nations Studies Program from pre-school to senior years and:

- to teach our children to revere the culture of their parents, grandparents and ancestors
- to transmit, preserve and strengthen the children's identities
- to open children's minds to new worlds, new ideas, new responsibilities which could build a bridge to the other societies of the world
- to instil in our children the shared, not separate, cultures

The Program is to:

- create an awareness of the First Nations' issues
- teach the historical content of the First Nations peoples and treaties
- convey to the children the knowledge, skills and the language that will give them a broader understanding of the world and themselves
- correct the systematic defamation which has distorted, denied and deformed the truth of the children's cultural and historical reality
- recommend the culturally appropriate tests and library books

In keeping with the Manitoba Department of Education and Training Directive that the teachers have the prerogative of using 12 weeks or 30% of classroom allotted time to give greater emphasis to certain units or to choose other related topics, the First Nations Studies Program Committee decided that K – 8 levels of study be units of study with the present social studies curriculum.

To match content areas with topic areas, the following topics were decided upon:

Grade	**Cross Lake**	**Department of Education**
K	Cree Legends and Story Telling, Family and Self-Concept	Exploring my World, Concept of Self
1	Cree Legends and Story Telling	Human Needs and Human Interdependence
2	Woodlands First Nations: Past & Present	Changes
3	Cross Lake, Community Profile	Communities Today
4	First Nations Traditions and Contributions	Communities Around the World
5	First Nations of Manitoba	Life in Canada Today
6	Treaty 5, Indian Act	Life in Canada's Past
7	Economic Development & First Nations Communities	Spaceship Earth
8	First Nations of Canada before 1492	People Through the Ages

It was determined that Grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 subjects be school-initiated subjects; therefore, 10G, 21G, 31G, and 41G levels. It was also recommended that a selection, if not all of the subjects, become compulsory requirements for graduation. Since the Province of Manitoba, Department of Education and Training, has determined that the Senior IV class will require a minimum of 28 credits for graduation, the local Education Authority has made a decision to make the number of credits required for graduation greater by including some First Nations subjects.

Grade	**Cross Lake**	**Department of Education**
10G	History of the Metis of Canada	Canadian Studies; Canada Today
21G	The Fur Trade & Its Impact to 1992	North America: A Geographic Perspective
31G	History of the First Nations of Canada	A Social and Political History of Canada
41G	Contemporary First Nations Issues	World Issues

The most important aspect of the program is **story telling**. The First Nations have been noted to be storytellers. Storytelling has always been emphasized and everything was passed on from generation to generation orally as an integral part of learning. Through legends or stories, the children could learn about the world around them and how to live. The stories teach the children how to become real people in their real world - that they have to feel love, respect, and trust to know the joy of caring and sharing and be willing to help one another. When these feelings become an integral part of a person, he or she can then understand his or her purpose for being there and become a real person.

The stories tell about the world and why certain things and animals are the way they are; for example, how the loon walks the way he/she does. The stories are very amusing and fun for children; they also teach certain behaviour. Another example is a legend that teaches about disobeying one's elders and honesty. Most of these stories have a purpose and message. When the elders speak to the children, the children are interested and will listen.

C. Kisipanakak Wilderness Outdoor Education Camp

Kisipanakak Wilderness Camp is situated at the end of Cross Lake Reserve, 12 miles southwest of the community on the Nelson River en route to JenPeg. At Kisipanakak, at one time, around the 1940's and 1950's, the people of Cross Lake had a Co-op reserve garden. When they were looking for an ideal location to build the Wilderness Camp, Kisipanakak was the selected site. The Kisipanakak Wilderness Camp was constructed in the summer of 1995. The building was constructed under one of the articles of the Northern Flood Agreement – Schedule C – Cross Lake Community Trapline – (RTL) Registered Trapline License 56. The building is over 4,728 square feet. The building contains two sleeping quarters; one each for males and females. The camp can accommodate thirty-six persons. The camp is fully equipped with a kitchen facility and a large common room area. The building is heated by propane and a wood burning stove. There is no radio, telephone or television to distract your peace of mind. The place is well isolated, accessed only by boat in the summer, and by skidoo or bombardier in the winter.

The scenery is marvellous as only mother nature can provide such beauty. The sun, sky, water, trees, grass, flowers, and land all take part in the formation of different delightful sceneries. The sun is a welcoming sight in the early part of the morning; the sky clear or with it's different formation of cloud clusters seems to beckon you to enjoy the tranquillity of the wilderness; and the glimpses of fascinating rainbows in the sky seem to remind you of our Creator's promises to be near you forever if we allow Him. The sounds of nature are like a song contributed by all the birds, trees, wind, and the lapping of the waves. You cannot but enjoy and relax in such an immense relaxing atmosphere. At this place, you are away from stress, away from your everyday worries and problems of each day's routine. You take the time to breathe in all the fresh air that is available, without worrying about breathing in some environmental pollution. Even when it rains, the dancing raindrops that trickle down the side of the roof are a welcoming sound to your ears. This is a place where a person will be able to enjoy the quietness and capture the freedom of living in the wilderness.

Goals of Kisipanakak Wilderness Camp

- provide students with incentives to gain more interest in the preservation and conservation of the available natural resources in their surroundings.
- have students appreciate and value the traditional lifestyle of people before us, so that we may experience these values by keeping contact with the outdoor life.
- provide opportunities for all students to learn and apply all the necessary skills, methods, and techniques for all seasonal, commercial, recreational activities like fishing, hunting, and trapping.
- give participants the opportunity to experience the methods of trapping, fishing, and hunting, keeping in mind all laws and regulations regarding these activities.
- utilize local and community resource people to share their wealth of knowledge, understanding, and expertise in each significant area of outdoor education.
- allow students and participants to express personal growth, imagination, and creativity, and the development of social skills.
- allows the participants to learn and apply basic life and survival skills required for the outdoors.
- have students share and work together for a better and brighter future.
- provide students with an opportunity to develop self-pride in their personal growth and development.
- provide students with an opportunity to give ideas about their own interests that would benefit them the most.

- provide students with an opportunity to get a sense of belonging and pride from getting in close contact with nature, and to catch a glimpse of their grandparents' way of life, experiencing the freedom of living in the wilderness.
- allow participants to utilize and apply safety skills through planned outdoor educational activities.
- allow students to participate in leisurely and entertaining activities, to allow them creative expression and sharing in a natural setting.
- provide the opportunity for incorporating activities that promote the values to: share, love, show respect for self and others, be honest, have courage, be humble, and have pride in self.
- to provide information of the causes and effects of drugs and alcohol abuse.

Programming

The classes of students involved in the Wilderness Camp are Grades 5 - 8 from Mikisew School, and senior years from Otter Nelson River School. Each teacher is responsible for his/her class who works directly with the students, with the aid of parents as chaperons and elders as traditional teachers. The goals and objectives originate from the list of purposes. It is highly recommended that each trip be carefully planned for each day with the academic, and life-skills, needs reflected in the planning, keeping in mind the expectations of both the students and the instructors. With the help of the Outdoor Education Co-ordinator, each teacher plans with the resource people available for the trip, and students.

Planning and Preparation

This program is in operation from September to June each year with the exception of holidays throughout the school year. If possible, a yearly schedule is drawn out so that each class from senior years has a chance to experience and utilize the wilderness camp facilities and program. The schedule is drawn up early in September, as soon as the teachers have had their administrative or orientation days.

The list of elders and volunteer resource people is provided before the program commences in September. To make this happen to everyone's expectations, each person involved in the program (staff and students) is expected to work co-operatively so that the program will successfully achieve the goals and objectives laid out for each trip.

Teaching in an outdoor setting is very rewarding, informative and challenging. Delivery of instructional and behavioral objectives requires a tremendous amount of time for planning excellent outdoor education programs. The teachers, along with the students, need to plan carefully together so that their classroom studies can be put into practical use. The lessons planned for the students require observation, manipulation of animals or plants, research work, analyzing, recording and reinforcing topics that are relevant and pertinent to the students' needs of skill development.

Planning for the outdoor wilderness camp requires the involvement of other parties as well. The school board has to be made aware of the plans at all times, and permission slips from the parents have to be obtained, as well as a list of clothing that the child will need.

D. First Nation Science and Technology Program

The objective of the Cross Lake Education Authority was to operate a Science and Technology Summer Camp and year round school camps. The Science and Technology Summer Camp employs summer students and the schools have teachers and elders take the students to the camp during the school year. Each class is expected to make at least one or two outings to the camp each year. The Summer Science and Technology Camp offers participation in the camp to a large number of students. The mission statement of the Science and Technology Camp is that education is a blend of culture, tradition, and technology; the program will encourage our students to grasp the importance of Science and Technology. It will increase an opportunity for our students to pursue career educational paths in Science and Technology. The program gives an opportunity to our students to participate at this camp. It also creates awareness of our students that the First Nations people always had a history and their own traditions. It also teaches our students to revere the culture of their parents, grandparents and ancestors. It could also open the students' minds to new worlds, new ideas, and new responsibilities that could build a bridge to the other societies of their modern world. The program promotes friendships, trust, confidence, co-operation, and good communication in both English and Cree languages, leading to teamwork among the students. The students learn the skills of the traditional ways leading to modern Science and Technology. The students will be better prepared to enter the Science and Technology trades and become contributing members in their First Nations Society. These students can then become role models in their chosen careers in Science and Technology. Parents will also see the importance of supporting their children to choose careers in Science and Technology.

The program of studies includes:

- environment and ecology (rock formation, water levels, types of rocks, etc.)
- traditional crafts (paddle making, camp tools, etc.)
- study of astrophysics (sky, stars, weather, etc.)
- traditional skills of the First Nations People (fishing nets, duck hunting, and preparing and cleaning all catch)
- water navigation (canoeing, other boats, and understanding of safe water travel)
- camp fire safety (how to start fires, types of wood available to use, safety measures of outdoor fires)
- building camp shelters (what to use, emergency shelters)
- use of traditional tools (firearm safety, learning names of tools in Cree language, use of tools, safety of tools, and caring of tools)
- names of places, lakes, rivers, and islands (history/origin of names and traditional areas)
- preservation of foods/game (smoking foods, some picking berries, and learning names and uses)
- traditional medicines (learning herbs, plants, trees, uses for medicine, learning the names in Cree)
- seven traditional teachings (love, respect, humility, honesty, wisdom, courage and truth)
- cooking (bannock making, open fire cooking)
- water safety (swimming)
- duties/responsibilities (cleaning camp facility, dorm areas, etc.)

All these teach the students that they are important members of our First Nations communities. They learn about the traditional teachings of their people. They will have pride in themselves and can build up their self-esteem.

Elders are actively involved in these camps. They teach the traditional life-skills of the camps. The students' Cree language is enriched. They learn that their people have a history, a land base, nature, and all its resources. The program enriches their spiritual, emotional, mental and physical growth. Most of all, it teaches them to respect their environment.

E. First Nations Forestry Management Program

Cross Lake Education Authority has been able to establish a true partnership with Natural Resources Canada in acquiring control of the management of their forest resources. In the summer of 1989, a wild fire devastated the area surrounding the Cross Lake First Nations community. In fact, wild fires devastated many Northern First Nations communities where massive evacuations took place. The community members had to be evacuated to the rural and urban towns. After the fires, no clean up or reforestation ever took place.

The Cross Lake Education Authority undertook a clean-up project; cleaning burnt areas, salvaging wood for artistic projects, developing paths for walking or bicycling, developing park/picnic areas, and reforestation of the affected areas. All these projects are nearby the school areas, so the schools can utilize them. The schools utilize these areas to teach Science and Technology because the First Nations people view education as a blend of culture, tradition and technology. Too many times, Science has been taught only on paper, and we believe our people learn better by a hands-on experience approach.

The clean-up projects offered employment to our students and they have that sense of ownership to these projects. The projects create awareness of forestry management. It fosters awareness, to our students and community members, to respect our natural resources and to pursue careers in the area of natural resources and forestry. It also creates awareness to the total community to respect their natural resources and how forestry affects the whole environment. It also assists and enhances the First Nations people in that many artistic projects can be developed from the forests and are economically viable. Above all, the students develop recreational areas for themselves so that they can secure that feeling of ownership and pride.

F. First Nations Co-operative Education Program

The Cross Lake Education Authority has implemented a Co-operative Education Program in the Senior Years since the 1997-98 school year. This program was designed to meet the needs of the students who are delayed in their academic performance as a result of certain conditions, such as irregular attendance, suspensions, expulsions, personal/family problems, etc. The concept of this Cooperative Education Program is to provide students, who still want or need to be educated, to have an opportunity for further education, in a manner that will be unique and interesting for them.

The program provided a combination of academic and on-the-spot work experience for the students. The students began with two weeks of academics and one week of outdoor traditional life-skills. The students spend one week at the Kisipanakak Wilderness Camp with their teacher and elder assistant. The combination of work experience with in-class academics provides the students with a new outlook about the work force, while still reinforcing the importance and value of education.

The majority of students in this program are 17 – 19 years of age. The program provides the students with a better understanding of the work force, which they are soon to enter. The objectives of this program are:

1. To provide students an opportunity to see their elders in different roles, and to understand how they support their families.
2. To increase the students' awareness of the workforce and its environment.
3. To link the traditional outdoor life skills with the classroom experience.
4. To link classroom experiences and material with workplace experiences.
5. To recognize the increased importance of a life-long education in today's society.
6. To display the importance of basic Math, English, and Life Skills in today's work force.
7. To increase the students' level of "independence."
   a) showing up at work on time;
   b) showing up at school on time;
   c) showing responsibility and maturity.
8. To increase their sense of "who they are" as an individual as well as a member of their school, community and society - where and how they fit in; how important they really are.
9. To improve the students' level of reading, math, native language and oral skills.
10. To make school more enjoyable for the students which, in turn, will result in the students putting more effort to their work.
11. To prepare the students for the next level of education in all aspects.

Cross Lake Education Authority has implemented the Cooperative Education Program within the last three years.

G. Senior Years Program

In April 1987, the new school, Otter Nelson River School, was completed. This school was supposed to accommodate all students from pre-school to senior years.

After moving into the new school in the fall of 1988, we soon found out that the school could not accommodate the students in senior years.

In the first year of the new school, it could only accommodate the Senior II students. The school was already too crowded. In 1991/92, Senior II were accommodated with very limited space. After four years in the new school, we still have to send our students out to the various schools in Manitoba. Our students were soon dropping out and the dropout rate was increasing at an alarming rate. The system of sending students out was not working. Students have to be educated in their home area; this way, they can live with their parents where they rightfully belong. In the latter part of March 1992, the parents of Cross Lake First Nation met to discuss the senior years' program. Many parents came to this meeting and they decided to keep their senior years students at home.

In the 1991/92 school year, the nominal roll was 916 from Nursery to Senior II. The school was overcrowded and just could not accommodate any more students. In Senior III and IV, there were 105 students with a total of 1,021 on the nominal roll. With the senior years' students for 1992/93 school year, we were anticipating 193 senior years' students (private home placement students). To accommodate all senior years in the present school was totally impossible. A mandate was given to the Chief and Council and Cross Lake Education Authority by the senior years' parents to secure funding to build a temporary school building. As previously mentioned, our present school was designed to accommodate pre-school to senior years and the enrolment projections did not forecast long term projections, nor was the growing rate of the community fully anticipated. We realized that a mistake was made on the part of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada. Perhaps, if long-term projections were applied to the "Student Projection Methodology," students would not have to be sent out.

With the support of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada and Cross Lake First Nations, the Cross Lake Education Authority was able to secure a bank loan to build a temporary school. The school contains 14 classrooms, resource library, staff room, office and gymnasium.

In the 1992/93 school year, all our senior years students attended Otter Nelson River School with the exception of five students. The five students were in special programs and met the criteria to attend school elsewhere. Otter Nelson River School offered courses in Math, Sciences, English, Shops, First Native Language, and First Nations Studies. The second semester courses were Computers, Geography, Biology, Law, Chemistry, Economics and World Issues. There were already some students who had full creditation for a Grade 12 diploma. However, like any school, we have problems with attendance and dropouts. But the drop out rate is not as high as when they were attending school in other places.

The students are closely monitored by the support staff. In the high school area, there is a Guidance Counsellor, Secondary Counsellor and a Home/School Co-ordinator. These support staff members work closely with the school administration to keep the students in school. It is a good idea to have Senior Years at the reserve level. Students are home with their parents and have more support than they would if they attended outside the community. Since 1992, Otter Nelson River School has graduated two hundred and twenty two (222) students. Many have entered colleges and universities.

H. Community-Based Adult Training Center

In the mid 1970's, the first community based program was brought into Cross Lake known as BUNTEP (Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program). At this time, there was a selected small number of teacher assistants working in the schools who were going through the PENT program (Program for Education of Native Teachers). Over the years, there were more intakes of the BUNTEP program. To date, the Cross Lake First Nation has approximately forty-five graduates from BUNTEP and twelve graduates from PENT. There are other graduates from the other or regular programs from all the Manitoba universities. Throughout the years, Cross Lake has embarked on other training programs such as regular upgrading, college preparation, literacy, homemakers, mineral exploration, counselling skills, clerical bookkeeping, and Inter-Universities North. Some of the Inter-Universities North students have graduated with a Bachelor of General Studies degree and some are presently in the A.D. Education program at Brandon University. A Transition Year Program was also offered to prepare the senior years graduates to enter colleges and universities.

After the completion of our new school, Mikisew Middle School, the old temporary school building has since been converted to the Adult Education Center as of January 1997. Within the last two years, Cross Lake Education Authority has established a partnership with Keewatin Community College. Last year, Computerized Business Skills, Business Administration I, College Preparation II and III, and two Transition Year Programs were offered. These students receive social services income and were issued minimum incentive allowances to offset babysitting and transportation costs. These students have been successful. In the 1998/99 school year, a Transition Program, Business Administration I, Computerized Business Accountancy, two Mature Student programs I and II, and Basic Adult Education was offered with a total number of one hundred fifty students.

Presently, the Education Authority is working with Keewatin Community College to develop a joint agreement to establish the Cross Lake Regionalized Community College. It is proposed that it will be fully implemented in the 1999/2000 school year.

Cross Lake Education Authority's Proposed Wellness/Healing

The educational plan we propose to implement in our schools is to develop a wellness path for the students and teachers that can, perhaps, be extended to the parents and community. There is a tendency within First Nations to explain wellness as a balance of all the factors in one's life; a holistic perspective. The medicine wheel concept helps to illustrate that the balance and connection of all the aspects of life are necessary for wellness. Problems with one's life or within one's community arose from an imbalance or loss of connection with one or more of the aspects of the medicine wheel (Mussell, Nicholls and Adler, 1991).

Education is a life-long, continuous process requiring stable and consistent support. First Nations people of every age group require appropriate formal and informal opportunities for learning and for teaching. The education provided must be holistic. Education processes and institutions must address the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical development of participants (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996, p. 445). The report cites that the discussion of education issues proceeds according to four stages of the life cycle: the child, the youth, the adult, and the elder. The medicine wheel is used as the teaching and communication tool. The medicine wheel is used to discuss relationships and values. The medicine wheel represents the cycle of life; the wheel has no beginning and no end.

A. Medicine Wheel Concept

The medicine wheel is an ancient symbol used by almost all of the First Nations people in North and South America. There are many expressions of the medicine wheel concept: the four grandfathers, the four winds, the four cardinal directions, and many other things expressed in sets of four (Bopp, Bopp and Lane, 1983).

The medicine wheel is the way of life of the people. It is the understanding of the universe. The medicine wheel is the way given to the traditional peace chiefs, our teachers, and from them to us, and then to our grandchildren and future generations.

The medicine wheel is everything of the people. Among the traditional teachings, the first teaching is always the four great powers of the medicine wheel. There are four ways to be in this world, four paths to follow in the medicine wheel; they are named the great four directions: east, west, north, and south. The medicine wheel concept can be used to help see or understand things people cannot quite see. The medicine wheel is equally developed and is well balanced.

B. Seven Traditional Sacred Teachings

With all the nations of the First Nations people, there were Seven Grandfathers who were given the responsibility by the Creator to watch over the First Nations people. These Seven Grandfathers were powerful teachers. Today, these are what the First nations refer to as the seven traditional sacred teachings. Slowly, we have been losing these teachings, and we must bring them back to be taught to our children. These seven traditional sacred teachings are:

Respect - to feel or show honour or esteem for someone or something. To honour all of Creation or to show respect in the basic law of life.

Wisdom - listening to and following the guidance given to your heart. To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom.

Love - to receive strangers and outsiders with a loving heart and as members of the family. To know love is to know peace.

Honesty - to be honest at all times and conditions. Honesty is facing a situation and to be brave.

Humility - true happiness comes to only those who dedicate their lives to the services of others. Do not fill yourself with your own affairs. Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of the Creation.

Courage - to seek the courage and strength to be a better person and to be able to stand up for your people and to take risks. Courage is to face the foe with integrity.

Truth - being truthful at all times and conditions. Truth to know all the seven sacred teachings.

C. Talking Circle

Before implementing the development of wellness paths in the schools, the staff will be trained about the "Talking Circle." The traditional "talking circle" is a very old way of bringing Native people, of all ages, together in a quiet, respectful manner for the purposes of teaching, listening, learning and sharing. When approached in the proper way, the circle can be a very powerful means of touching or bringing some degree of healing to the mind, the heart, the body, or the spirit. One could call it a very effective form of Native group therapy.

The circle leader, teacher, or facilitator begins by passing around sweetgrass, cedar, or sage, so that the participants may "smudge" themselves. We have been taught by our ancestors that these sacred herbs have a purifying effect upon our total being. As the smoke from the herbs surround us, we are better able to connect on many levels with the others within the circle, with ourselves, and with what we are about to experience.

The group leader (or a volunteer) will then open the circle with a prayer. The circle is now in the hands of the Great Spirit, Grandfather, God, or whatever one chooses to call the Higher Power. The leader might next have the people shake hands to acknowledge each other. It is a good thing to do, especially if this is a new circle of people.

The group leader then begins to "talk to the people" without interruption; talking to one person, but to all who are present. All are expected to listen respectfully until the speaker is finished. All who sit within the circle will have an opportunity to express themselves if they choose or they may simply listen, but all who speak will be given the same respect – they will be listened to. The group leader, and most likely others within the circle, may bring eagle feathers or stones or other sacred objects which are passed around the circle and shared. We believe these sacred things to be helpers in furthering our connections to spirit and to our higher selves; they help us listen; they aid in our learning.

Within this sacred circle, we are encouraged to speak not only from the mind, but from the heart; we are free to share our innermost feelings if we choose. Regardless of whether one brings a traditional teaching or a personal problem to the circle, all persons are valued, respected and listened to. There is an Indian belief of: right time/right place/right people/hearing right things, and we rely on that belief within the circle. When all have spoken, anyone may request that this be a "closed circle," that all that has been said and the identities of the participants shall be confidential. If no one requests a closed circle, all may freely share what they have learned.

The circle is closed with prayer. So – in this old way – we have come together to teach, to learn, to touch each other's spirit; that we may find strength to live in these two worlds; that our people may live (Positive Indian Parenting Manual, 1994).

D. Implementation of the Traditional Approaches

There is a great need to incorporate the traditional Aboriginal approaches in our schools, more so when we are promoting healing and wellness for our students and school staff. As mentioned earlier, our First Nations students are living in a world which is fast-paced, competitive and a forever-changing environment. Our students are caught with the negative forces that prevent them from getting that intellectual development and academic learning. Before any successful school change can happen, an attempt has to be made to address those experiences mentioned. In order to bring wellness and healing to the school, the whole school has to be involved. The schools need to look at other programs, such as: alcohol and drug abuse, family counselling/mediation, family planning, other addictions and abuses, and other wellness programs. The whole community has to network and utilize all the resources from the total community. The traditional values of the First Nations have almost been completely eroded. We need to re-teach these traditional values to our students.

There has to be that strong commitment to inclusion of staff and student wellness and early prevention strategies on wellness programs. The development of the wellness/healing plan for Cross Lake Education Authority schools sets the stage for parents and community members to make a plan for long-term support and commitment to the students of Cross Lake First Nation.

Conclusion

Since Cross Lake First Nation took control of education in 1988, the education system has made much progress. The number of Aboriginal school staff has grown tremendously and they are fully qualified. The majority of the administration staff is Aboriginal and administration staff possess administration degrees.

Before local control of education, the student graduation level was in the low numbers. Since the community brought their children home to be educated in Cross Lake, the graduation numbers have significantly increased. The numbers are usually no less than thirty graduates each year. More so recently, a community-based program is offered to prepare these students to enter colleges and universities. The dropout rate in the senior years declined from a high of 50 – 60% to less than 20%. In the middle years, the decline was not so dramatic, but the dropout rate was less than 10%.

The Cross Lake Education Authority added and developed their own curriculum program for the revitalization of the Cree language and culture. The success rate in the post-secondary program has been generally quite high. This is most obvious in the teacher education program. Most of the major achievements include that:

a) all decisions regarding Cross Lake's education system are made by the Education Authority;

b) the Education Authority is accountable to the people for the entire education program;

c) the hiring of staff is the responsibility of the Education Authority;

d) the management of funds is the responsibility of the Education Authority;

e) The Education Authority offers the senior years programming;

f) the Education Authority was able to build a temporary school through a bank loan at a value of 1.4 million dollars, then constructed a 15.5 million dollar school through a bank loan again;

g) more recently, the Education Authority is working on a joint venture with Keewatin Community College to establish a Regionalized First Nations Community College in Cross Lake.

All these accomplishments, the success story of Cross Lake Education Authority, stem from the creative and innovative planning of the Cross Lake First Nation people.

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Two Watershed Speeches of the 1980s and 1990s: Metis History and Status in Canada

Paul Chartrand

An Absolutely Uncritical Look at What has been Written about the Metis

I am a Metis. I grew up in the historical Metis community of St. Laurent on the south-east shores of Lake Manitoba.

In this address, I review what has been written by Canadian writers about the Metis people, and I begin by looking at some writings about the Metis of St. Laurent.

Marcel Giraud addressed, in 1937, what he termed the emergence of "a social group entirely destitute, defenceless, and paralysed by an over-sensitive shyness among civilized people." [1]

Giraud's analysis led him to conclude that the tiny village of St. Laurent was occupied by a "very backward" group. Here, culture was almost non-existent. [2] In contrast, Giraud pointed to the Metis inhabitants of the Red River Valley, the "civilizing nucleus of the half-breed (sic) population." [3] These "Metis de la Riviere-Rouge," Giraud characterized as "well-adjusted people, constituting a sort of mixed-blood upper class, to a large extent on a par with the white farmers." [4]

But the Metis of St. Laurent were a different type. Here, he observed, "their mental traits appear as incompletely developed as their biological composition ..." [5]

Given these historical conclusions, it should occasion no surprise that the weakling who now addresses you should indulge in anything but an absolutely uncritical look at the judgments of history. I hope that my poor expression will not cause you much trouble.

The so-called "poly-glot jabber" of the Metis has often been remarked upon. The first so-called "half-breed" Scrip Commissioner, a lawyer from London, Ontario named W. P. R. Street, recounted in his 1885 report the problems he had understanding what he understood to be the "French" language of the Metis of present-day Saskatchewan. It caused him trouble to translate such names as 'Crasus Tome' to 'Chrysostome,' 'Frozine' to 'Euphrosyne' and 'Cheboo' to 'Thibault.' [6]

I note that some of my uncivilized and uncultured friends in this room have no such trouble with this language. [7]

What is the story of the Metis? What are they like as a group, and as individuals? It has been written, and therefore we know ... that,

> when the agricultural frontier advanced into the Red River Valley in the 1870's, the half-breed (sic) community of the West la nation metisse (sic) was doomed, and made its last ineffectual protest against extinction in the Saskatchewan Rebellion of 1885. [8]

It is also written, and therefore we also know, that,

> At Batoche, the Metis nation was broken, and thereafter, though there were individual Metis, and Metis communities in the West from Pembina to the Athabaska, there was no more a coherent people or a unique community. Civilization had triumphed over barbarism ... the Metis ... were shattered, and survive today as submerged communities and marginal persons. [9]

And what does history tell us about life in these submerged communities?

> [They] maintained their primitive characteristics and archaic economy, living in either abundance or poverty according to the vagaries of hunting and fishing, motivated by a superstitious mind, destitute of all ambition, and rebellious to the idea of giving schooling to their children ...
>
> ... Around the towns and villages they waited for whatever chance occupations might come up, or else lived in apathy and misery because the ordeal which they were undergoing did not evoke in them that energy which made the superiority of the White. [10]

Also, in these submerged communities, it is written that,

> the bulk of the population are more and more addicted to lazy ways, and rely on the government for their source of living. They eke out a poor existence, but seldom complain of their sad lot. Some of them even like to narrate how speculators have deceived them, and humorously give urban names to the unoccupied lands upon which they have erected their shacks, such as 'St. Boniface,' 'Ft. Rouge' ... [11]

And what does history tell us about these marginal persons who lived in these submerged communities? It has been written, and therefore we know, that,

> ... the past experiences of these people and the conditions under which they are now living do not produce a type of person much in demand in our society. [12]

The reason for that has also been written about:

> The white man's maxim, "Work that ye may eat," had been entirely foreign to their philosophy. They had never needed to work in order to exist, and had no such incentive. [13]

It is also written that,

> Many of the subtleties of the white man's life are as yet lost on the Metis. Most of them remain amoral, and illegitimacy occasions no stigma. [14]

I hope there are no cultured single ladies here, because I have spied some amoral Metis in this gathering.

Another characteristic of the marginal persons has often been remarked upon. One writer comments about a Metis' habit:

> ... sa passion pour les liquers fortes, qu'un trop grand nombre d'autres Bois-Brules, comme on appelait aussi les Metis, partageaient malheureusement avec lui ... [15]

And in the same vein, history has said about one of this speaker's ancestors:

> Michel Chartrand, quo'on appelait par sobriquet "OPISHKWAT," la 'vessie de poisson,' pensioma l'abbee Gascon pendant quelque temps, c'etait un excellent coeur mais malheureusement adonne a la boisson et violent quand il etait vivre ... [16]

And about the war of resistance at Batoche in 1885, it has been recently written that the Metis, "may have only dimly perceived what the real goals were ..." [17] Have these dim-witted marginal persons any redeeming qualities?

> They have an acute sense of observation which, allied to their artistic minds, explains their curious gift for drawing ... [18]

Perhaps I can auction off the doodles I made on my serviette during dinner?

It has also been written, and therefore we know, that, "The Metis take naturally to ranching, and ... many of the men affect the stetson and denim garb of the cowboy." [19]

Also, ... "they are competent lumberjacks, and take naturally to carpentry and woodworking." [20]

But these superglue-type individuals have difficulties in adjusting their health statistics to meet the high Canadian general population profile because, as it is written, ... "pneumonia [is] a bugbear to people who have not yet become fully convinced of the benefits of cool, fresh air in their cabins." [21]

Progress, nevertheless, is being made because ... "the unutterable filth of a decade ago has been replaced in most instances by something approaching cleanliness." [22]

And we should have known that, sooner or later, we would have Metis playing in the N.H.L. when we were told about Metis youngsters that ... "although lacking in equipment, they have as much fun with bent branches for hockey sticks as the average youngster with a full kit." [23]

But, has the plight of the Metis gone unheeded by the state, and by the Church, in Canadian history?

In 1890, Sir John A. Macdonald received a letter from D. H. Macdonald with these suggestions for the resolution of Metis demands:

> ... I urge an early settlement of their demands. There are various ways of accomplishing this, either by giving scrip or by adopting some means of benefitting and civilizing them such as the following: To place all the semi-civilized half-breeds on a Reserve with the Protestant element on one side and the Catholic on the other. To have an Agent and one white Assistant to manage the Reserve who again would appoint say ten or more Native police or overseers from among the most intelligent of the half-breeds. Should you appoint a man who is capable of controlling men, as Agent, he will easily govern his little Colony through his Police, whom again he could govern through their stomachs. [24]

And what was the motivation behind the helpful suggestion? The same letter explains that it is "solely for the sake of peace ... as well as because the half-breeds are a political factors, that I urge an early settlement of their demands." [25]

The same motivation is revealed in a letter of a churchman to a politician. The Church suggested that a grant of land to it would be a good thing because Metis could be gathered to,

> remove them from the uncertain existence they were leading, and away from the infectious influences of vice and demoralization which, were there no prompt remedy, would very soon become a danger of extreme gravity to public order. [26]

And governments did step in and tried to do something about the Metis, because it is recorded that "in 1941, a government rehabilitation scheme tossed thousands of dollars worth of cattle, horses and agricultural equipment among them." [27]

And how did the Metis respond to such government largesse? "They ate the cattle, left the machinery to rust in the still uncleared timber land, and remained wards of the government." [28]

In the meantime, both academic commentators and bureaucrats had voiced the opinion that the Metis ought to have been treated like the Indians; that is, they ought to have been placed on reserves and controlled through their stomachs, that is, by a policy of planned starvation. [29]

Indeed, in at least one instance, the Church did establish a Metis Reserve, but it failed. How did the churchmen react to this failure?

> ... after having skilfully gotten around the Metis and won the approval of the Government, the missionaries opened the Reserve to a significant contingent of French-Canadians. [30]

Father Lacombe, writing in 1895, described the Metis-government relationship in this way:

> It is acknowledged today that the half-breeds have been well and justly treated by the Government, but unfortunately owing to their natural improvidence, they have wasted what they received. [31]

The notion that the government dealt not unreasonably with the Metis has its adherents today, for it was written late in 1983 that,

> the Metis grievances were at least partly of their own making; ... the government was on the verge of resolving them when the Rebellion (sic) broke out; ... Riel's resort to arms could not be explained by the failure of constitutional agitation; and ... he received a surprisingly fair trial. [32]

So there .....

In 1870, the federal government recognized the existence of Metis Aboriginal rights in terms of the *Manitoba Act*. That recognition continued in government legislation and policy into the twentieth century.

In 1898, Archer Martin, a member of the Canadian Bar and a prominent writer on the legalities of land rights, wrote about the Aboriginal title of the Metis of Manitoba. He wrote,

> The question of Aboriginal title is not too well understood, in spite of the fact that, in the course of the rapid extension of the British Empire, it is one that constantly crops up ... [33]
>
> One not familiar with the peculiarities of the people known in Manitoba as half-breeds, or Metis, would naturally ask how [the *Manitoba Act* land grant] to them would extinguish the Indian title, though the name itself would go to show that they had a right in blood to participate to the extent of a moiety. [34]

In 1982, the Canadian state enshrined the Aboriginal rights of the Metis in terms of section thirty-five of the *Constitution Act*.

1982: (1) The existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

(2) In this Act, "Aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada.

Nevertheless, an examination of the recent literature on Metis Aboriginal rights turns up references to "overheated rhetoric about sacred rights" ..., the "semi-mystical aura of Aboriginal rights" [35] and an article boldly entitled "The Case against Metis Aboriginal Rights." [36]

These controversial matters are very difficult for a Metis to understand, for it has been written that "as soon as severe intellectual discipline is required, the mixed-blood gives up every exertion." [37]

Rather than think problems through, the Metis have focused upon a hero-figure, a symbol of their struggle for survival, Louis Riel. About him, the churchmen declared in 1887:

> Nous, pretres des districts qu'affecte plus particulierement la rebellion ... desirons attirer l'attention de nos nationaux du Canada: Louis 'David' Riel ne merite pas les sympathies de l'eglise catholique romaine et des membres de cette Eglise. [38]

A middle-of-the-twentieth century historian declared:

> It was their [the Metis] tragedy that the instability and violence of Riel, reflecting the inherent instability and ready violence of his own uncertain people, ruined his achievement and destroyed his nation. [39]

In 1983, a revisionist history of Louis Riel and the Metis attracted the newspaper headline: "Riel deserved to hang, book says." [40] The same book, which was chosen by the Book-of-the-Month Club, received a reviewer's comment in *Maclean's* magazine that it "provides sad proof that a century after Riel's death, the sentiment of vengeance remains strong." [41]

Keep in mind, ladies and gentlemen, that this choice of quotations from history must have been motivated by what has been termed the "extreme sensitiveness" of the Metis. [42]

But, nevertheless, these are not quotations gleaned from the graffiti of washroom walls! These quotations are not the off-hand remarks of uneducated persons in a moment of passion! These quotations are gathered from the words of the historians of the highest esteem in this country, and from writings in learned journals written by professional writers who could draw upon the resources of the educated person in Canada.

Is there anything that all writers are agreed upon concerning the Metis? Yes, I think most are agreed that the Metis, these one-and-a-half men (half-Indian, half-French and half-devil) can have fun in their own way ... can have fun being devils. I see some of those people that I know right now. I think I shall go join them ... Waiter, bring us five gallons of red wine and call the cops! [43]

Endnotes

[1] M. Giraud. "A Note on the Half-Breed Problem in Manitoba." The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (1937), p. 541-549 at p. 542.

[2] M. Giraud. Le Metis Canadien. Paris, Universite de Paris, 1945, p. 1077.

[3] M. Giraud, supra, note 1, p. 543.

[4] loc. cit.

[5] Ibid, p. 548.

[6] Manuscript of Mr. Justice W. P. R. Street, Royal Canadian Institute, Toronto, 1885.

[7] In St. Laurent, where I grew up, and in other Metis communities where the old language is still used, the word 'Metis" is pronounced 'Michif,' or sometimes 'Michiss." In our speech, all French 't' sounds become 'ch' as in 'chip' and 'd' sounds become 'j' as in 'jam." Robert Papen notes that formerly the French term for Metis was *metif* (metive in the feminine) and explains the linguistic rules I have just introduced in 'Quelques remarques sur un parler Francais meconnu de l'Ouest Canadian: Le Metis' in (1984) 14 Revue Quebecoise de Linguistique, No. 1, pp. 113-139.

[8] W. L. Morton, "The Canadian Metis," The Beaver, Sept. 1950, p. 3.

[9] Ibid, p. 7.

[10] M. Giraud, "The Western Metis After the Insurrection," Vol 9, Winter 1956, Saskatchewan History, pp. 1-15, at p. 8.

[11] M. Giraud, supra, n. 1, at p. 545.

[12] Jean Legasse, "The Metis in Manitoba," 1954.

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[13] D. F. Symington, "Metis Rehabilitation," *Canadian Geography Journal*, April 1953, pp. 128-139, at p. 134.

[14] *Ibid*, p. 139.

[15] A. G. Morice, *La Race Metisse: Etude Critique*, Winnipeg, Chez ;"Auteur, 1938, p. 16.

[16] Sr. Pauline Mercier, f.m.m., *Renseignements sur Saint-Laurent, Manitoba*. White Horse Plain School Division, Elie, Manitoba, 1974, at p. 10.

[17] T. Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered*, 1983, at p. 77.

[18] M. Giraud, *supra*, n. 1 at p. 548.

[19] D. F. Symington, *supra*, n. 12, at pp. 136-137.

[20] *Ibid*, p. 137.

[21] *Ibid*, p. 138.

[22] *Ibid*, pp. 137-138.

[23] *Ibid*, p. 138.

[24] P.A.C. *Sir John A. Macdonald Papers*, M62H, Vol. 295, p. 134960.

[25] *loc*. *cit*.

[26] M. Giraud, *supra*, n. 9, at p. 12.

[27] D. F. Symington, *supra*, n. 12, at p. 130.

[28] *loc*. *cit*.

[29] See M. Giraud, *supra*, n. 1 and letter of D.H. Macdonald to Sir John A. Macdonald, PAC Sir John A. Macdonald Papers, M62H, Vol. 295, p. 151360.

[30] M. Giraud, *supra*, n. 9, at p. 14.

[31] Public Archives of Alberta, Fr. Lacombe, OMI, "A Philanthropic Plan to Redeem the Half-Breeds of Manitoba and the North-West Territories," Annex B to P.C. 3723, 28 Dec. 1895.

[32] T. Flanagan, *supra*, n. 16, Preface, p. viii.

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[33] Archer, Martin, The Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures, London, William Clowes and Sons, Ltd., 1898, p. 94.

[34] Ibid, p. 100.

[35] T. Flanagan, supra, n. 16, at p. 59.

[36] T. Fllanagan, "The Case Against Metis Aboriginal Rights," Canadian Public Policy, (1983), IX:3:314-325.

[37] M. Giraud, supra, n, 16, at p. 59.

[38] Le Veritable Riel, Imprimerie Generale, Montreal, 1887.

[39] W. L. Morton, supra, n. 7, p. 7.

[40] Eric Wells, Winnipeg Free Press, March 10, 1984, an article reviewwing T. Flanagan's Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered.

[41] Mark Abley, Maclean's, Nov. 21, 1983, pp. 63-64, "A rebel's disputed hanging."

[42] M. Giraud, supra, n. 1, at p. 544.

[43] I am indebted to Harry Daniels for this extraordinary expression.

Building the Momentum – A Keynote Address on Implementing the Recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Paul Chartrand

In this paper, I propose to offer some brief reflections on some of the major recommendations in the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) and on federal responses to them. I propose also to comment on some of the major aspects of the current public dialogue on Aboriginal issues. Finally, I shall offer a tentative outline of a conception of the law of Aboriginal rights that might accommodate the constitution and reconstitution of Aboriginal nations in Canada, as a modest contribution to the debate which will follow today.

It is clear to me that the litmus test to judge Canada's policy response to the RCAP approach to Aboriginal nation governance is the adoption of the recommendations in volume 2 (Appendix, p. 165-166) to enact legislation to establish a process whereby the government can recognize the accession of an Aboriginal group or groups to nation status and its assumption of authority as an Aboriginal government to exercise its self-governing jurisdiction (Rec. 2.2.27). The companion recommendation is the holding of a First Ministers and Aboriginal leaders conference to create a forum charged with drawing up a Canada-wide framework agreement to establish common principles and directions to guide the negotiation of treaties with recognized Aboriginal nations (Rec. 2.3.28; App. A, p. 166, Vol. 5).

As you know, the federal response has not ventured into this area at all; the Department of Indian Affairs and the *Indian Act* continue to govern federal policy; the Prime Minister has shown no interest in such a national meeting. While the Premiers have made repeated calls for such a conference, their interest seems to focus not on justice for Aboriginal peoples, but on trying to prevent 'federal off-loading.' Aboriginal leaders, preoccupied as they must be with the affairs most pressing to their organizations and their constituents, have done little to promote a national concerted approach to the federal recognition of Aboriginal nations. Where things really matter, there is nothing new under the sun.

None of this is intended to trivialize the projects that have been undertaken by Canada. Important initiatives have been undertaken, in the name of a response to

RCAP, in areas such as Youth Centres, health care, and in addressing the legacy of abuse at Indian Residential Schools, those domiciles of despair and trauma that were a part of the strategy of dismantling Aboriginal cultures and nations.

The RCAP's central recommendation was phrased in the principle of participation and elaborated in the first pages of the final report. No more should federal Aboriginal policy be developed and decided in isolation, but only in effective consultation with Aboriginal people, the ostensible beneficiaries of such policy. How does the federal response of January 1998 measure up? Its language is the language of Cupertino and partnership, but we find that much of the policy itself was developed unilaterally by federal officials. We heard representatives of those Aboriginal people not served by the Department of Indian Affairs complain that it was not a good start to launch a partnership policy in isolation from its would-be partners.

The federal response trumpeted calls for reconciliation, as if there had once been conciliation in all cases. One such call was directed at my own people, the Metis nation of Western North America, and proposed that something be done to deal with the 'sad events culminating in the death of Metis leader Louis Riel.' 'In renewing our partnership,' the policy stated, 'we must ensure that the mistakes which marked our past relationship are not repeated.' Yet, we find that, recently, federal officials commissioned or conducted a public poll on exonerating Riel without telling the representatives of the Metis people about it. These are the federal officials in charge of government relations with representatives of the Metis. The Metis representatives apparently found out about the poll the way the rest of us did – by reading about it in the newspapers.

It used to be that civil servants advised governments on sound policy options; today, in Canada, some of them seem to have undertaken the role of pollsters who feed instant opinion to elected officials who have forsaken the role of leadership and mediation of conflicting interests. What is happening to our political culture?

Allow me to state my dismay at politicians' attempts, in the name of 'reconciliation,' to tamper with the soul of the Metis nation by suggesting that **they** will deal with Riel. As a young boy, I heard about Riel and particularly Dumont, about the fighting and the heroism of the people who fought on our side against the strangers from the East. I absorbed the idea that Riel was a symbol of the Metis struggle for justice and part of our mythic stories, those inherited from our ancestors and woven into the very fabric of our collective identity. For me, Riel is a Metis hero and symbol of injustice because that was the view of my father and the views of my people. Relying on the spiritual self-sufficiency of my people, I have no need to feed my self-identity with the approbation of strangers about Riel's actions. The story of Riel is a stain in Canada's story; let the stain remain.

There are some, of course, who take a different view, even among Metis people. Recognizing that Riel was unjustly tried and convicted for reasons of political ambition, they nevertheless would now go, cap in hand, to Parliament Hill and ask for the blessing of the grandchildren of the immigrants who hanged Riel.

Reconciliation, as official government policy, is not an easy task; the events it tries to deal with engage the emotions and stir the soul. They are almost always stories of conflict, of triumph and tragedy, and they involve people portrayed as winners and losers. It is easier to use such stories to stir nationalistic feelings and rouse political followers than to promote reconciliation.

The way the reconciliation policy on Riel is being developed illustrates another important point. The marginalization and political powerlessness of Aboriginal people can be measured by the extent to which their identities, both individual and collective, can be manipulated and influenced by the dominant society. The case of persons who accept that their identity is affected by legislation such as the notorious 'Bill-C31' is well-known. But consider this as a measure of the marginalization of the Metis people; we can not even determine the status of our own national heroes, an important determinant of national identity. Our conception of ourselves is influenced by what others think about us. The federal approach shows Metis people on the sidelines, witnesses to an unseemly national debate between liberal strangers on the Hill, on the one hand, and the caretakers of the racism of the 19th century on the other hand. There must be some merit in the adage that 'reconciliation means one side has all the power and you better get reconciled to that.'

The RCAP final report did not deal with simple issues. We had to make arguments about the place of Aboriginal individuals and groups not only within the social fabric of Canada, but also within the common law and the law of the Constitution. We had to deal with questions about the identity of 'nations' or 'peoples' in which a common law right of self-government might be vested, in the absence of case law. We had to reconcile constitutional principles that animate the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* with others that animate the affirmation and protection of group rights in section 35 of the *Constitution Act 1982*. Today, several years later, these large questions still remain largely untouched by the case law, and must be approached on the basis of principle.

I believe that if Aboriginal self-government is going to have any significance in the common law of Canada, it has to be based on a coherent explanation of the law of the *Charter* pertaining, to individuals on the one hand, and the law of group rights in section 35, on the other hand. The educative function of the law might be engaged here to debunk the popular notion that Aboriginal self-government suffers the infirmities of 'race-based' legal regimes. Here is my tentative attempt to do that, taking advantage of the principles that may be discerned in the jurisprudence since the release of the RCAP final report.

One of the most persistent red herrings dragged across the path of public debate is the myth that Aboriginal self-government proposed that special rights be accorded to 'racial minorities.' This bogey man is raised only to be knocked down by people who categorically oppose Aboriginal rights for all sorts of reasons, not all of them honourable. This pernicious notion must be debunked if Aboriginal self-government is to be accepted in the long run as a legitimate idea based upon principles that are broadly acceptable to both Aboriginal people and the Canadian public.[1]

As long ago as 1942, Ashley Montagu had exposed the fallacy of 'race' as 'Man's Most Dangerous Myth.' [2] Adopting Montagu's explanation that myths provide a sanction for action, we can see that opponents of Aboriginal rights create the myth of 'racial minorities' to provide a false explanation for the differences between Aboriginal peoples and others in Canada. Associating this false difference with South African apartheid and the struggle for equal civil right by African Americans, the myth has strong public appeal. As the RCAP Final Report explains, the Aboriginal 'peoples,' as such, comprise distinct historic, social and political communities, and not racial minorities. The significant difference between Aboriginal peoples and others in Canada is that they are historic 'peoples' who have been dispossessed in their homelands and who deserve, today, the benefit of the recognition and respect demanded by contemporary notions of human rights and other norms of public morality. It is a matter of community, not biological descent. It is a process whereby individuals and communities nurture a sense of belonging based on history and culture, on kinship and place. It is not biological determinism foisted upon communities.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court of Canada has itself fed the myth of 'race' in decided cases, and the *Charter* constitutionalizes it. Given this background, it is necessary to review the distinction between individuals identified on the basis of 'race' and entitled to the equal benefit of the law by virtue of s. 15 of the *Charter*, on the one hand, and the Aboriginal communities in which are vested group rights protected by s. 35 of Part II of the *Constitution Act 1982*, on the other hand.

In cities and towns across Canada, there are individuals who are genetically descended from the people who were here from the beginning, the 'ab-original' people, but who do not belong to any particular Aboriginal community. Perhaps, they were adopted to strangers at birth; perhaps, they were born of parents themselves descended from two or more historic Aboriginal groups and who do not identify themselves with any one Aboriginal community. In this illustrative case, the *Charter*, which is concerned with the rights of individuals and not of historic nations, requires that these persons be equally entitled to the benefit of the law and prohibits adverse discrimination based, *inter alia*, on 'race.' Section 15(2) goes on to permit affirmative action for individuals and groups of individuals who have been disadvantaged on account of 'race,' perhaps in employment opportunities or in access to housing. Through the clumsy notions of 'race' and 'racial minorities,' the *Charter* requires equality and affirmative action based on the notion of corrective justice, ideas that conform with Canadians' views of individual and social justice.

At this point, it may be emphasized that neither these individuals nor the groups of individuals contemplated by s. 15 have, *per se*, any group rights. To my knowledge, no credible argument that an individual has a right of self-government has been made. Neither do groups comprised of such disadvantaged individuals have, on that account alone, any claim to self-government.

Turning to section 35, we note that the Aboriginal and treaty rights protected by the Constitution are 'existing' rights; they are vested in historic peoples that were a part of the Canadian historical, social and political fact in 1982, and in the members of the communities comprising these 'peoples.' I adopt the RCAP definition of an Aboriginal 'people,' or 'nation,' in which the common law right of Aboriginal self-government is vested; that is, 'a sizeable body of Aboriginal people with a shared sense of national identity that constitutes the predominant population in a certain territory or group of territories.'[3]

As a dynamic political and social community with group rights, a 'people' in section 35 must consist of freely associated individuals who share a common sense of belonging and a vision of a common destiny. The constitutional values of democracy and freedom of community association cannot permit the foisting of an unwanted identity and legal status dictated by birth alone upon an individual.

On the other side of the coin, the basic objective of Aboriginal rights, that of protecting distinct cultures of Aboriginal peoples, would not be advanced by coercing all individuals identified by 'racial ancestry' to form the 'self' of 'self-governing' communities. Group rights recognize that the protection of a distinct culture is only possible if the group has the right to create conditions in which the culture may survive and flourish. Any rights exercisable by individuals are exercisable by virtue of their membership in an historic cultural community, and not by virtue of their personal antecedents alone.

The RCAP report recognized the fact that the historic nations have been submerged, cultures damaged, and that the process of constituting and reconstituting nations would be a difficult process that in many, but not all, cases would take time. In the meantime, the Supreme Court has found that Aboriginal rights are vested in rather small communities that could not meet the test of constituting a 'people' having a right of self-government on the RCAP model. So-called 'site-specific' Aboriginal rights to use the resources of the land require an account of Aboriginal self-government that accommodates the existence of small Aboriginal communities with certain rights with a theory of a right of Aboriginal self-government vested in large groups.

The fundamental principle of 'democracy' and other constitutional values elaborated in the *Quebec Secession Reference* allow the argument that the right of self-government may be exercised when either a 'nation' on the RCAP model or an aggregation of small 'core' Aboriginal communities, identified by the common law tests to prove Aboriginal rights, have demonstrated the will of the people comprising the 'nation' to exercise the right of self-government.

It seems to make sense, in light of both historic and contemporary facts, to recognize that smaller communities may, by democratic means, assert their common vision of acting as a self-governing nation. The principle of 'subsidiary' or of 'delegation upward' of governing authority may assist an explanation of the doctrine of Aboriginal self-government that follow the RCAP model of vesting the right in larger groups and also accommodates the Courts' development of a doctrine of Aboriginal rights vested in smaller communities.

The difference with the RCAP model, here, is that authority to govern is delegated upwards to the 'nation' and not downward to the communities that comprise it. It is thought that this concept better reflects the need to ensure the legitimacy of political representation and respects the fundamental principle of democracy.

In conclusion, the right of self-government is not vested in villages or 'bands' created by the *Indian Act;* it is vested in 'peoples' freely constituted according to democratic principles. The right is not vested in groups of individuals who come together by virtue alone of personal descent from Aboriginal ancestors, but is vested in groups comprised of freely associated communities identified by the common law tests of Aboriginal rights.

Individuals have Aboriginal rights by virtue of their belonging to the group, and they belong to the group by virtue of their participation in the life of the community, reflected in their participation in the activities that comprise Aboriginal rights at the community level. Aboriginal rights, understood in this sense, are never 'portable;' they inhere in communities and individuals in their communities.

The true policy of self-government must recognize all such Aboriginal communities and meet Canada's obligations to make the common law right of self-government effective.

I should emphasize that these arguments have to be based on what the courts of Canada might adopt. In doing so, I have not been able to consider what justice might demand or what might be the implications of applying the norms behind the international concept of the right of self-determination of peoples. We have to recognize the role of law in rationalizing the exercise of power, and there is little point in making arguments that the courts cannot accept if they are to keep their political legitimacy as the courts of Canada.

It is not difficult to criticize the Court's approach to developing the doctrine of Aboriginal rights. Ever since the decision in *Kruger*, [4] it has been apparent that the Court was safeguarding its participation in the development of Aboriginal rights policy. It might have been better for the Court to develop concepts of obligations requiring the government to negotiate the contents of Aboriginal rights with Aboriginal peoples directly, rather than set itself up as the forum for deciding the contents of social relations within Aboriginal communities and peoples. In undertaking this role, the Court has had to introduce unfamiliar changes to judicial analysis, such as receiving oral testimony about historical events, and the implications have not been happily received by any side. The Court's adoption of what might be called a broad policy approach to developing the doctrine of Aboriginal rights has the advantage of opening the scope of arguments to do justice, but with the disadvantages of legal uncertainty.

Adopting the RCAP approach to Aboriginal self-government requires the adoption of a vision of Canada as a multi-national North American country, as opposed to a multi-cultural country in which Aboriginal peoples struggle among themselves for last place.

How much can the law help the development of a vision of a multi-national Canada comprised of self-governing Aboriginal nations, as well as retain Lord Durham's conception of 'two nations warring in the bosom of single state?' The Supreme Court has been eloquent in proclaiming its role as the guardian of the Constitution and the rights of minorities who cannot wield power at the ballot box. I think that watching the development and application of the unwritten principles of the constitution elaborated in the *Quebec Secession Reference* to the doctrine of Aboriginal rights, particularly political rights which are engaged in the debate on Aboriginal self-government, should give us a good answer to that question.[5] Principles such as democracy and the protection of minorities, along with the theory of government obligation identified in that case, offer rich prospects for the development of the right of Aboriginal self-government. The court's role will be tested. In time, the *Quebec Secession Case* might be seen, in retrospect, as the most important Aboriginal rights case in history.

In conclusion, I emphasize that the RCAP concluded that **fundamental change** is required to provide justice for Aboriginal people, and fundamental change is not easy to achieve in a country where Aboriginal people do not carry much political weight, and where a legacy of deep mistrust haunts relations between Aboriginal peoples and Governments. As illustration of that fact, consider that, in 1982, the framers of the Constitutional amendment saw fit to constitutionalize the calling of a meeting of First Ministers and Aboriginal leaders; [6] Canada must be the only country on earth to have so constitutionalized mistrust.

Allow me to conclude by referring to the comments of the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, meeting in Geneva this month. Noting Canada's admission that the situation of the Aboriginal peoples remains the most pressing human rights issue facing Canadians, the Committee expressed its concern that Canada has not yet implemented the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples. Citing instances of failure to abide by international human rights standards, the Committee criticized Canada's failure to explain the elements that make up the right of self-determination as applied to Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

The issue of Aboriginal governance is clearly not a matter of unilateral claims by

Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It is a matter of right to be found in common law principles, a matter of affirmation and protection by the law of the constitution, and a matter of abiding by fundamental concepts of State obligation and public morality required by international law.

Endnotes

[1] See Paul L. A. H. Chartrand, 'Aboriginal Self-Government: The Two Sides of Legitimacy' in Susan Phillips *How Ottawa Spends: A More Democratic Canada? ... 1993-94*. (Ottawa, Carleton U. Press, 1993) pp. 231-256.

[2] Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (London, Altamira Press, 6th edition, 1997) Originally published in 1942.

[3] RCAP Final Report, Vol 2, Part One, at p. 166.

[4] *Kruger v. Manuel v R* [1978] 1 S.C.R. 104. The Court adopted a narrow approach rather than a broad doctrine of rights that would apply generally to Aboriginal people in Canada.

[5] *Reference re Secession of Quebec* [1998] 2 S.C.R. 217. This is the case that was referred by the Government of Canada on the question of the legal validity of Quebec secession from Canada. In rendering its decision, the Court elaborated some important new 'unwritten principles of the constitution' which are to be applied to the interpretation of the Constitution. These principles may be developed in favour of 'political rights' as part of the doctrine of Aboriginal rights, and, in particular, to argue for positive obligations of Government to respond to political initiatives and claims of the Aboriginal peoples whose rights are now protected in specific provisions of the Constitution.

[6] Section 37 of the *Constitution Act 1982*, as amended, required the Prime Minister of Canada to convene several conferences of First Ministers to discuss 'constitutional matters that directly affect the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including the identification and definition of the rights of those peoples to be included in the Constitution of Canada,' and to invite representatives of the Aboriginal peoples to the conference.

Working for the Government in Indigenous Education: Strategic Planning in Current Maori Education in New Zealand

Rawiri Brell

One of the most important challenges in education is in the area of policy development and implementation for the government. This is even more challenging if you happen to belong to an Indigenous group of people who have a special relationship with the government, and those people are not receiving the same kinds of benefits from the government's programmes as everyone else.

As the Indigenous minority in New Zealand, Maori people have a special relationship with the Crown, which is set out in the Treaty of Waitangi (see below) signed between Maori chiefs and the British Crown in 1840. The Treaty sets out obligations of the Crown to Maori to protect their language and culture, and all that entails, and to protect their right to self government. The Treaty also provides the Crown with an obligation to govern in the interests of all New Zealanders, but taking cognisance of the special relationship the Crown has with Maori.

Since 1840, the actions of the Crown have broken down some of the key binding elements of Maori tribes – their language, significant parts of the culture, their basis of economic development, their land, fisheries and forests. This has been achieved by a carefully constructed process of colonisation through the key instruments of government legislation and resourcing. The European churches have also taken advantage of this process.

Since the late sixties, the focus on global Indigenous peoples' rights has helped many countries involved actively in colonisation to refocus their legal and economic obligations to those groups which have lost out economically, culturally, and spiritually. As nations come to grips with repairing the wrong-doings of their ancestors, Indigenous groups are able to move forward, putting aside the actions of the past and refocusing their energies on rebuilding and revitalising.

For Maori tribes in New Zealand, addressing the injustices of the past is a major priority and one which has become an integral part of the psyche of the culture. It is a relatively new phenomenon, consuming enormous amounts of human and financial resources in a process of settlement.

The challenge for both Maori and the Government is to address these important issues in an environment where the majority of tribes have yet to have their treaty concerns settled, and where the consequences of colonisation such as disadvantage caused by poorly aligned education policy and the effect this has had on employment, health, housing, and so on, must be addressed as well.

Making this even more challenging is the priority for Maori to want to take over addressing these issues themselves in partnerships with various government departments and within the parameters set by government.

With tribes and the government at various stages of addressing treaty issues and issues to do with education, welfare, health, employment and so on, there is an increasing need by government to ensure that its way of thinking about how it does all of this work is well grounded in a clear vision about where the nation, as a whole, should be heading, and for Maori to be able to see itself clearly in this. For Maori, this means being able to articulate their own vision grounded in their values of culture and language. There will always be debate between the 'sovereign' responsibility of the Crown and the 'self development' responsibility of Maori. Agreement on this issue is far from over and, until it is, Maori will feel disempowered to be able to manage and govern their own affairs.

The Role of Maori Public Servants

For Maori public servants, these tensions are real and challenging. Multiple accountabilities gnaw away at the Maori public servant drawing them into sub-tribal, tribal, and pan-tribal conflicts between different policies and strategies developed by different government departments. At the heart of being able to manage the opportunities, which can result from these tensions, is the need for a clear strategy about how to move forward and the need for clear parameters of accountability.

There is often much criticism of Maori public servants especially those working in education and, more particularly, Maori education. They are blamed for all the Maori failure in schools and communities, and are regularly criticised for not making changes suggested by so-called experts working in the field. They are drawn into stakeholder debates over resources, and debates about supporting the value of one Maori intervention over another. They are also at the call of politicians and are often drawn into sometimes complex Maori/Crown situations because they are Maori.

Balancing the different accountabilities requires skill and expertise, and this is made much easier if what is being pursued in a policy sense aligns well with what tribes are expecting, and the channels for this to happen are open and transparent. Influencing the leadership in government to work in this way is a critical role for Maori public servants which can have positive flow on effects in the way policies are thought about, developed and implemented. This kind of relationship, which draws in both Maori and the Crown, is part of a longer-term process for moving responsibility and authority to Maori for the control of social and educational services, in partnership with the Government.

Often, in the 'struggle' to improve Maori education and Maori involvement in how this comes about, those working in the field as part of the education machinery can forget that Maori public servants are an integral part of that machinery and have an important role to play. Writing them off because they might be too close to Government is a tactical error, which potentially can reduce the overall effectiveness of utilising all the resources a Government is providing to ensure a better Maori education outcome. Maori public servants thinking the same way fall into a similar trap. Quality and open Maori leadership, which can focus on a broad across-the-board approach, underpinned by the principal values and beliefs of tribes, can help focus attention on making the best use of all the resources (human and financial) to address these important issues.

Another important role for Maori public servants and the senior leaders of the main government department is to ensure that non-Maori public servants are held responsible for the quality of their services to Maori. In the Ministry of Education, the performance management system, which provides the framework for performance agreements and appraisals, ensures that staff must meet a minimum standard in the way they work in Maori education – policy development, implementation and operations. They are appraised on these competencies regularly and this is linked to remuneration. Alongside this, there is an on-going programme of training and development in the area of Maori responsiveness, which involves four-day visits to tribal areas living in the heart of different sub-tribes sharing information, concerns and hospitality with the local people. Maori language courses are provided for all staff who want this, and there is a regular programme of seminars based on key strategic and policy-related matters to do with Maori. The Ministry has implemented a process which monitors its overall responsiveness to Maori. Reports on this are provided to relevant Ministers of the Crown.

Some of the key issues in addressing Maori concerns in education

It is reasonably clear to many in New Zealand that responsiveness to things Maori has been quite significant over the last 10 years, but there is still much more to do.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education commissioned a meta analysis by Simon Chapple, Richard Jefferies and Rita Walker, of the Maori education literature and research produced since 1988. The reviewers found strong evidence to show that the relative family resource position of Maori is an important contributor to education disparities. First, it was indisputable that, on average, Maori families have fewer material resources than non-Maori families in terms of income and housing. For many years, Maori have had to spread those fewer resources over more children than other groups in society. In addition, Maori parents have had less education, including lower literacy levels themselves, to pass on to their children.

These disparities begin at birth in terms of lower amounts of material and cultural capital available to Maori children. The impact of the lack of resources is likely to be cumulative since the resources are necessary to help performance at every stage of the education system.

They found that many educationalists have focused on the school system as the primary and current source of disparity. However, despite its popularity, the evidence in favour of the school side barriers argument was not that strong. The reviewers found that ethnographic studies in the area are rich in detail and description, but frequently difficult to generalize outside the area of study.

Conclusions sometimes appear to be overly dependent on the prior views and experiences of the researchers. However, this did not mean that the school system might not be an important source – it was just that the present research and literature was not strong in providing reliable evidence to support this.

There is some support in favour of the peer pressure hypothesis, but the area remains under-researched. Peer pressure not to succeed may be caused, in part, by what the reviewers call *opposing secondary cultural characteristics*, developed by Maori as a result of the historical accumulation of the effects of colonisation, land confiscation, assimilative pressures and relocation of many Maori into working class urban environments. There is some support for this theory from the fact that, on some dimensions, Pacific Island school leavers perform better than Maori, given that their cultures and languages remain largely intact back in their home islands.

If issues such as racism and discrimination on ethnic grounds were substantial causes, then one would expect similar results with other minority groups. Again, what might be a contributing factor is the interaction of the school side barriers with the secondary cultural characteristics of Maori developed as a consequence of over-accumulation of the effects of colonisation.

There was not much agreement about the multi-dimensional nature of the causes, but the Ministry needed to have a better understanding of how all of these interact and, in particular, the sequence in which these things happen and their subsequent effects on other kinds of attitudes and behaviours. The factors which create this dynamic are varied and complex, and some will be difficult to fix quickly, although there will always be pressure for this to happen.

The point about having a good understanding of the causes, the dynamics, and incentives these create is that it provides a more reliable position from which to start to address the issues. What is relevant is the order in which this might need to happen and this is certainly made easier when the medium- to long-term direction is established and the present situation is known. Understanding the present situation involves the implementation of a more deliberate plan of research, which was one of the main reasons for the Chapple work. This, subsequently, has become part of an internal Ministry project to develop a Maori education research framework, one which will provide, inter alia, a more reliable way for assessing research priorities.

When this information is combined with information from Maori about what they want from education, it becomes an important starting point for all of the Ministry's work. We have certainly had very strong messages in the past about what these points are, but getting the other side right is always going to be a challenge.

Some of the whanau (family) wrap-around efforts in kohanga (Maori medium early childhood language nests grounded in a strong Maori philosophy) and kura kaupapa Maori (Maori medium primary and secondary schools grounded in a strong Maori philosophy) show that education can be an important catalyst for not only helping to improve learning, but also in strengthening the whanau. Targeted Maori parent education and literacy support can strengthen the efforts in these situations as can promoting other activities and benefits which can help strengthen the role of whanau and parent. There are many lessons to be learnt from these enterprising activities and they need to be seen as an integral part of the way we do things from now on. It is suspected that the amount of leadership and energy this kind of activity absorbs is enormous but, as some people are saying, the effort is well worth it.

The present policy response

At present, there is a significant programme of policies covering all sectors of education, much of which has relevance and importance to the education of Maori.

They include a range of policies aimed at supporting the expansion and quality of Maori medium education in different options, in the early childhood, schools and post schools sectors. The Government's Maori Language Strategy sets out a number of strategic objectives designed to improve the chances of the language surviving. This has included a Maori Language Education Plan which focuses on teacher supply, resources, assessment, and school and community support for learning the language. Other policies cover areas such as Maori teacher workload, Maori boarding schools, curriculum resources, teacher education, professional development, and so on.

There are more generic policies designed to help students who experience learning and behavioral difficulties or who are from low income communities. These include:

- the Targeted Funding for Educational Achievement funding formula (a targeted resource to support schools in poor communities);
- encouragement being given to schools to form clusters for governance and management purposes;
- Maori focus within Special Education 2000, a policy for students with learning and behavioral needs;
- work that falls under the general umbrella of Strengthening Families, a programme between three government departments (Health, Welfare and Education) aimed at better coordination of services to very at-risk families;
- support for the "Books in Home" scheme, a programme jointly funded by the Government and the private sector where primary school children in poor communities are given new books to keep;
- schooling improvement initiatives - a national programme to help failing schools;
- National Assessment initiatives to derive better information on student performance;
- School attendance and alternative education initiatives;
- Maori boarding scholarships and grants;

- Targeted Individual Entitlements to support Maori children to attend private schools;
- the Fully Funded Option – an option where primary and secondary schools receive all of their staffing and operations funding to manage themselves - often referred to as bulk funding.

(Note: There are 2,700 primary and secondary state schools in New Zealand. Each is governed by a board of trustees elected every three years. The board is the general employer of the professional staff of the school, although the principal is the day-to-day manager of the professional staff. About 300 schools have opted to be fully funded. The rest have their teacher salaries paid and managed centrally through the Ministry of Education. The majority of the 140,000 Maori children attend the main-stream schools, while about 4,000 are enroled in kura kaupapa Maori state schools. There are about 650,000 students enrolled in primary and secondary education in New Zealand.)

There is also a range of services provided by the Specialist Education Service, Careers Service, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Skill New Zealand, and Early Childhood Development. These are Crown education agencies contracted by the Minister of Education to provide specialist services to the education sector. In some localities, there is private sponsorship of certain school-related activities. Some schools also make use of other local and central government schemes. In Rotorua City, the Ngati Whakaue Tribal Endowment Fund, which draws a consideration resource from central city rentals, redistributes this to schools around Rotorua. This fund now has a much stronger focus on supporting Maori education initiatives.

Outside these areas, the move to more enabling resources and remuneration policies and the forthcoming review of the *Education Act* offer some potential to increase the responsiveness of the school system to better meet the needs of Maori students.

Quite apart from issues of additional resources, there are questions about whether the overall thrust and balance of policies is being well directed at the areas of greatest priority and immediate need. For example, in discussions with some schools and their communities, we get a sense that the range of policy options available can be quite overwhelming and that opportunities are being lost because schools are stretched or don't have the capability.

We know that policies are interpreted differently by different people, and in different situations, and with different results. The sum effect of this can be quite variable where two schools of similar profiles, drawing children from very similar communities, can come up with quite different results. In the work on the East Coast (Ngati Porou Tribe) and in some of the Northland schools, a lot of this variability is due to the way the professional leadership is able to read and interpret policy and, therefore, make best use of the resources they have. A lot has to do with how communities respond to their responsibilities, and the way they interact with their teachers and principals. If the capability is not up to scratch, then it's going to affect the education of the students. Some of this capability is dependent on the quality of basic grounding received in initial teacher training and in subsequent professional and curriculum development.

A framework for a more strategic way of addressing Maori education

In 1997, the Ministry was directed by Government to develop a more strategic way to address Maori education concerns. The over-arching reasons for doing this were:

- to break down the 'ad hocery' that builds up as policies are adjusted to bring a better focus on Maori, usually after the event;
- to establish a more deliberate plan of action for closing the gap between Maori and non-Maori; and
- to explore options to increase the return on current Vote: Education spending and, in the second instance, to explore new options.

The strategy would signal not only a new direction, but also a new imperative by Government to focus attention on the education of Maori over the medium term, linking this to other strategies in the social and economic area. An important ingredient in all of this would be the role Maori would take in partnership with the Government.

The main messages coming from the consultation with Maori, as a basis to develop the framework were:

- Maori wanted more say in education;
- there needed to be more accountability;
- there needed to be more responsiveness and diversity in education;
- there needed to be changes in attitudes and expectations; and
- there needed to be better information and communication.

There certainly was some acceptance that everyone could do more (parents, schools, and teachers).

In the Ministry's thinking about the broad shape of an education strategy framework, five inter-connected strands or elements act as the basis for how we might address Maori education concerns. These are relevant to all involved, and they include both mainstream education challenges and those to do with Maori medium education. **The first is about much better communication.**

Good communication is about saying the right things at the right time and in the right way, and, naturally, based on good information. In some areas, we do lack good information and getting this can sometimes be difficult. The Chapple work highlighted some of this. We know ourselves, as both managers and teachers, and as students, how difficult it is to get good information at the right time and in a form that is easily understood. Working out the best way to do this, so the task is efficient, is an important value to consider in taking a more strategic approach (the Chapple, Jefferies, Walker report mentioned earlier has two versions, the first is the technical academic version and then there's a more lay person's version).

How we communicate our messages is absolutely critical. It is one of the most basic of all of our needs, but is probably given the least amount of importance because we sometimes assume, and wrongly so, that everyone will understand what we're saying. Naturally, a lot depends on what you have to say, how you say it, and whether the message is one that you want to hear. Knowing what all the different groups are saying and how they see the problems being solved does help to draw the bigger picture. Making the connections across these different players and facilitating information sharing is an important part of our work and, no doubt, yours. The same skill is required of teachers as they communicate with parents, their colleagues, and their students.

Becoming more effective in how we communicate our messages can happen in a number of areas:

- providing Maori with good information and a greater ability to get more from existing policies, such as being clear about the expectations that parents and teachers should hold for the education progress of Maori students;
- providing information that not only describes a policy, but also helps explain the different ways in which policies could be utilised by schools and trustees;
- refocusing the Ministry's information and communication strategies to put greater emphasis on communication to communities and applying more face to face exchanges;
- providing examples of good practice in ways where schools and communities can

utilise the information quickly and effectively;

- providing good information and advice to iwi (tribes) and other Maori groups wanting to become involved in education;
- utilising existing networks of other education agencies, of Maori education groups, local networks, and the Maori media to help communicate information;
- building and maintaining good working relationships with key Maori groups in education to help informed thinking around new initiatives and to explore local solutions and opportunities.

All of these points have relevance for the Ministry and other education providers and stakeholders.

The second strand has to do with maximising the benefits from new policy work.

Education stakeholders and consumers need to be assured that, when the Ministry is developing policies, it should have a good idea of their likely effects on Maori people. One of the best ways to do this is to involve Maori in the process, and one of the best ways to do this is to have already developed good and reliable two-way relationships with Maori people.

This would not only be for consultation purposes, but also to leverage off their networks and leadership, and they off ours. At the heart of this is the goal to build and keep alive healthy alliances which, at the end of the day, become a foundation for helping to sustain a more strategic way of using resources and for getting better results. The issue is whether this is seen as an integral and necessary part of the Ministry's business, or an add on, something to do when things go wrong. The former is certainly being promoted as the most viable, especially for the long term.

A significant factor in helping to improve outcomes for Maori is the role that non-Maori have to play. After all, they basically control much of the resources and make most of the decisions which impact on Maori, and they are largely responsible for the general direction education is heading. Without their support and effort, changes in the general stream of education could continue to be slow. Many of the changes in responsiveness to Maori mentioned before have come from non-Maori cause champions. Some of them might have seen their efforts as a Treaty obligation, but many others see their commitment as a very sensible way to improve Maori outcomes. Working alongside them to build their responsiveness to Maori, through the instruments of performance management systems, information provision, professional development and

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quality assurance monitoring, is a critical role for Maori in the Ministry.

Effective monitoring and evaluation to help inform the ongoing review of policy is important and would also relate to new initiatives such as:

- Developing an effective National assessment strategy;
- Tertiary and Teacher Education reviews;
- *Education Act* review and improving accountability;
- Maori language education plan as part of a wider Maori Language Strategy;
- National Qualifications Framework - developing Maori unit standards and qualification approval roles to support Maori knowledge, traditional and contemporary.

The third element is the evaluation of existing policies and their effectiveness.

An important part of taking a more strategic approach has to do with understanding how well current policies are working. Linked to this, in the short term, and as part of better communications, is improving access, understanding facilitation and, as said before, the quality of communications. For example, a school clustering project, which aims to reduce the workload of principals and boards, was not well communicated, so many schools remain unaware of its benefits. Another example was the additional support provided, in 1997, for professional development for Maori teacher educators to help strengthen their capability in Maori medium education, for which there was little response.

In the medium to long term, there needs to be an ongoing and systematic review of the policy programme, identifying where policies are working, exploring ways to increase the workability of these in areas where there isn't any progress, identifying where there are gaps and coming up with new options for these. As said before, it is both about making better use of existing allocations and exploring new options. It's also about letting people know about successful initiatives in such a way that they can quickly come to understand them and be in a good position to make decisions about how these might improve their situations.

The fourth strand is the process of ongoing engagement with Maori.

Underpinning a stronger strategic focus is the varied and important role Maori groups and parents can play in improving achievement, and the place of ongoing relationship management and engagement with Maori in supporting this. This is certainly a key priority for the Ministry and, no doubt, one for schools and for other education providers as well. The engagement has to be two-way, and it should maintain a sense of balance and perspective. It should also be about adding value to the process.

Links with tribal and pan-tribal organisations are important, as are the links with more local sub tribal groups. For the Ministry, it is important to ensure the messages being conveyed are understood and supported in the Maori aims and networks of the Crown education agencies.

The fifth and final element is about achieving more effective social policy coherence.

A key strand in the way Government needs to work is by getting better coherence in social policy developments across Health, Welfare, Employment, Housing and Education. The Strengthening Families policy is an important attempt to ensure the efforts of Health, Welfare and Education can be better targeted at the most at-risk of all families in the country. Housing and Employment and, to some extent, Welfare have an effect on the quality of family life and, in particular, the amount of time and resources parents are able to give to their children. But, so does education.

Strengthening parenting skills through parent programmes and adult literacy programmes would be an important part of building up the capability of families to help children to learn. For teachers to be able to do things effectively, their initial preparation is very important. Having the confidence and basic understanding to be able to work with a range of different parents and students, with a range of different expectations and demands, is an important quality to develop, as is knowing how to go about getting problems solved, especially the more complicated ones dealing with local politics and leadership.

In policy development, the Ministry has been focused on changing how we think about Maori aspirations and concerns. This is particularly relevant to the more detailed design of policy and the need to get more effective uptake of policies on the ground.

Our thinking and advice now puts more emphasis on the need to move away from "one-size-fits-all" ways of thinking to approaches that put greater emphasis on accommodating local solutions to local needs and strengths.

The Ministry acknowledges the need to work much more closely with Maori parents and communities, and to be listening to those communities. Such receptivity is being reflected in our approach to schooling improvement initiatives in areas of the Tuhoe, Ngati Manawa and Ngati Porou tribes.

If social policies in multiple domains are communicated carefully, there will be longer-term and more durable gains. It implies that more time spent in developing and shaping policies can see the gains coming faster through more effective interventions once decisions are taken.

This does raise some issues:

- In practice, the process of building relationships and gaining trust is a time consuming and gradual one. This process creates some tensions and trade-offs between the need for getting things done in a hurry and the need for good buy-in by the local community and schools.
- Moving to more local solutions brings the benefits of greater local involvement and control, but does mean an expectation of greater levels of assurance and accountability regarding the effective delivery of policy on the ground. Such accountability is particularly necessary where the Ministry and Maori communities, or umbrella organizations, are prepared to consider more "wholesale" arrangements for the local delivery of services.
- There are also practical issues relating to the Ministry's capability to invest in a worthwhile and meaningful way with all potential Maori stakeholders. As more tribes look to become involved in education, our ability to support the development of these can become very stretched and a possible source of frustration.
- We find that a clearer understanding of our respective responsibilities and the different pressures and constraints we each face is vital. In developing local solutions for local situations, we need to rely on people with informed local knowledge and an understanding from them of what is needed for policies to make a real difference in their communities. For example, Te Runanga o Ngati Porou (Ngati Porou Tribal Trust) will always know more about its people than the Ministry. The same goes for other tribes and Maori groups. The Ministry has its "constituencies" to manage in terms of persuading other agencies and Ministers to adopt new approaches. Like schools, we have much to contribute, but we need to shape and adapt our contributions through listening and enhancing the contributions of others.

Supporting and enabling schools to better respond to the needs of Maori students

The majority of Maori students are educated in mainstream schools. Maori representation on boards of trustees continues to be much lower than would be indicated by overall population trends. The schooling improvement initiatives confirm that many schools and communities find it hard, in practice, to develop good working relationships with Maori communities.

The voluntary involvement of the Maori community in helping schools with Maori culture and language and with Maori children, generally, is a unique arrangement in the New Zealand education system. These arrangements clearly work best when Maori are involved from the beginning and not simply brought in after problems have emerged.

Clearly, in some cases, there are excellent examples of ways in which schools, teachers and communities have been able to develop approaches to improve educational outcomes. However, too often, it seems difficult for Maori to become involved in the life of the school or for schools to find ways of effectively engaging with the parents of young Maori.

The consultations around the strategy mentioned before confirm that many parents do not feel empowered in their relationships with schools. A consistent theme from the consultations was a demand for schools to be more accountable for their services to Maori. Many expressed a concern that they did not have a clear understanding of what they should expect their children to achieve at school, nor did they get good information to judge the progress of their children.

On the other hand, Maori parents were also talking about what they needed to do to better support their children in school. Effective parent participation would require both schools and the parents to think seriously about how they could be doing this work better. It means that schools would have to take the Maori community on board, that resources and expertise would be allocated to meet certain objectives, and that there would be regular reporting to parents about progress. More importantly, it would have required the professional leadership in the school to develop, in association with the parents, a medium- to long-term plan about where they needed to be heading, based on a good assessment of where they were now, how they were going to get there and with what resources, systems and processes, and how they would know they were on the right track.

Within the development of a more strategic approach, we see merit in developing examples, guidance and information that would assist schools and communities to be more supportive and more responsive to each other, to be able to sit down together and plan these things in a collective sense, not only sharing in the difficult parts, but also in the joys of achievement and progress.

Expectations about the Treaty

The Treaty settlement process has raised the awareness that many Maori want to take more control over their own development, and to see references to the Treaty built much more explicitly into policy and administrative settings.

The consultation on the strategy brought out a number of differences as to the practical application of the Treaty in the design and administration of education policies. Within the range of views expressed was a general view that Maori and the Crown must be working together.

The Ministry's approach has been a practical one, rather than one centred on addressing constitutional issues. It has focused on:

- providing general support for policies that are more enabling of diversity and increasing the quality of information and responsiveness that providers make available to their student and parent communities;
- a much stronger focus on building relationships and consultation, and getting alongside different Maori groups in a collaborative sense to help get the job done. It also supports what many schools are doing;
- recognising the importance of building a stronger Maori dimension into all that we do and generally increasing the overall responsiveness of the Ministry to Maori;
- seeing the need to "close the gap" as one of our key strategic priorities. Within this context, a strong emphasis is being placed on the interface between education and social and other policies directed at students and families at risk;
- a willingness to look positively at solutions that lie "outside the box." In doing this, however, we still look rigorously at the factors and issues that must be made right for such approaches to work.

Such approaches do have implications for Maori. For example, in supporting Maori to take control of an education initiative or programme, we would be looking for them to manage the resources and capabilities, and take responsibility for the risks.

The Ministry, though, is also conscious that it cannot rely on local Maori organisations, which often have few resources, to pick up additional responsibilities without some support. Importantly, consideration needs to be made about the kind of resources a school, community and the Ministry could be contributing when helping to strengthen relationships and improve education.

Conclusion

I have tried to draw out what some of the important considerations are in thinking about a much more strategic way to address Maori education concerns and the role officials can play to help promote this. We haven't got all the answers yet, and we're probably a long way from this, but we've got some important things to move forward on. The Ministry knows it can improve the core of what it does – better and smarter ways of communicating; smarter ways of developing and implementing policy and effecting a better return from existing policies; better across the board coordination and integration and creating and maintaining healthy, positive and trusting relationships with Maori. The latter focused on devolving more authority for co-ordination and integration to Maori in partnership with the Government.

We know that schools can make a difference, but it takes a lot of dedication, good leadership, effort, and understanding, and we know that the role of parents in this effort is critical. We also know that socio-economic and family resource factors have a considerable impact on outcomes, but we know of situations where schools and teachers have been able to overcome these factors.

The Ministry is committed to taking the step that has eluded many before - to produce a strategy which will give a greater level of assurance and confidence that there will be increased benefits for Maori in all parts of the education system. But, we must do this together, understanding the overall direction and the fact that Maori will choose a number of different pathways to reach their destinations. Their control of these pathways, with the Government's support, will be the essential element in making this work.

Education and Renewal in Aboriginal Nations: Highlights of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [1]

Marlene Brant Castellano

Introduction

The theme of the International Summer Institute is Aboriginal Education and Self-Government. These two aspects of Aboriginal development are often treated as separate sectors and I am happy to see them converge in these discussions, as they did in the work of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). In these pages, I propose to highlight the pivotal place that education occupies throughout the RCAP Report. I begin with an introduction to RCAP's mandate and the overall thrust of its analysis and recommendations. I then outline the role of education in achieving the fundamental changes proposed in the areas of governance, economic participation, social and cultural revitalization, and renewing the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. Finally, I offer some comment on the impact, to this date, of the Commission's recommendations on education.

Mandate of RCAP

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established by order of the Government of Canada in August 1991. The creation of the Commission was precipitated by the reaction of Canadians to armed confrontations between Aboriginal people and the Canadian state at Oka, Quebec in 1990. Canadians maintain an image of themselves as peacekeepers to the world. They were appalled that longstanding, festering conflict over Mohawk lands, targeted for the development of a golf course, could lead to the deployment of tanks, helicopters and sharpshooters against a small band of self-styled warriors, youths and women barricaded for weeks in a treatment centre. Public opinion prodded the Canadian government to pursue a different path to resolving deepening conflict with the Aboriginal population.

After extensive consultation carried out by Brian Dickson, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister appointed seven prominent Canadians, four of them Aboriginal persons, to serve on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. RCAP was given a comprehensive mandate covering the history of relationships between Aboriginal people and the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole, treaties, self-government, lands, economy, justice, social and cultural issues – in short, the whole gamut of Aboriginal experience. It would take five years and 58 million dollars to fulfill the mandate.

Commissioners listened attentively to more than 2,000 presentations from individuals and organizations, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, at public hearings in community halls, conference hotels, prisons and hockey arenas across Canada. Funds to support the preparation of briefs by Aboriginal organizations were secured and distributed. Over 350 research projects were commissioned. The output of all these activities was channeled into a computerized information system with sophisticated software to assist teams of analysts and writers in searching out the crux of multiple problems and solutions grounded in the wisdom and resourcefulness of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples alike.

The RCAP Report (RCAP, 1996) was submitted to the Prime Minister and released to the public in November 1996. It encompassed 3,500 pages in five volumes and made 440 recommendations, covering every aspect of the Commission's extensive mandate. The Report went beyond analysis of a so-called "Aboriginal problem" and challenged not only the government, but all Canadians to consider a "contradiction at the heart of Canada." In the words of the Commission:

> In the minds of people across the globe, Canada has come to represent the highest ideals of freedom and respect for human rights....Our country has become a model for the world in many ways, yet the fundamental contradiction of building a modern democracy upon the subversion of Aboriginal nations and at the expense of the cultural identity of Aboriginal peoples continues to undermine our society. As a Commission, we see this contradiction manifest itself in harmful ways in Aboriginal communities, and we recognize the basic threat it poses to the legitimacy of Canadian institutions" (RCAP, 1996, 1:607).

Aboriginal people, who worked with the Commission, at times gave vent to anxiety that, with so much expertise applied to so many issues, we were in danger, once again, of finding our lives carved up into bureaucratic definitions of specific "problems," violating a fundamental premise of Aboriginal philosophies – that everything is related. The genius of the Report, giving expression to the vision of the seven commissioners, is that it places relationship at the core of its agenda, then carefully delineates the

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interconnectedness of changes that are required to renew the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Renewing the Relationship

The language of renewal flows from the view of history set out by RCAP in Volume 1 of its Report: *Looking Forward, Looking Back*. This view acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives that experience can be seen as a recurring cycle in which old truths take on new meaning as they are experienced in emerging contexts. Thus the struggle to assert the vitality of Aboriginal cultures and economies and the efficacy of distinctly Aboriginal forms of government is a new phenomenon. At the same time, it represents the renewed expression of ancient knowledge and capacity.

The historical framework within which RCAP situates its findings sets out four stages in the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples (RCAP, 1996, 1:36-40). The first stage is that of separate worlds, a period when Aboriginal nations lived on their traditional territories, harvesting the riches of the land and operating trade networks. Colonial records from the time of early contact confirm oral traditions of first peoples that their societies were self-regulating and self-reliant, maintaining remarkably good health and orderly social relations.

The second historical stage was that of contact and cooperation extending, with regional variations, roughly from 1500 to 1800. While not entirely free of conflict, this period was marked by increasingly frequent contact, the establishment of trade and military alliances, intermarriage and mutual cultural exchange and adaptation.

The third stage, designated "displacement and assimilation," extended from the early 1800s to the issuance of the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy* (The White Paper) in 1969. The non-Aboriginal population became dominant numerically and politically. Aggressive policies to assimilate Aboriginal people into the Euro-Canadian mainstream included relocations, residential schooling, imposition of elected forms of government under the Indian Act, and outlawing of Aboriginal cultural practices.

The fourth stage, in which we now find ourselves, is "negotiation and renewal." This stage was initiated with the rejection of the federal government's White Paper which sought to make Indians "citizens like any others," terminating treaties and reserve lands, and removing all distinctiveness of status and federal obligations with respect to Aboriginal peoples. The period has been marked by political activism and overt resistance, which occasionally takes on ominous overtones as in the Oka crisis.

Landmark judgements of the Supreme Court of Canada, and the emerging voice of Indigenous peoples in forums supported by the United Nations, have played a part in pressuring the Canadian government to enter into dialogue with Aboriginal communities and organizations.

The Commission's analysis and its numerous recommendations are directed to dealing with the legacy of the period when public policies supported displacement and assimilation, systematically undermining Aboriginal institutions of governance and economy and the social/cultural cohesion of communities. The RCAP Report argues that restoring vitality to Aboriginal nations and their communities requires fundamental change on several fronts. We must regain the authority to make decisions that determine the conditions of our lives – this is self-government. We must re-establish viable economies that reflect our values and ways of dealing with one another – this is economic self-reliance. We must strengthen our health and skills and self-confidence so that we can meet our responsibilities to ourselves and all our relations – this is holistic healing. And, because we share this land with people of other origins, we must forge a new relationship characterized by mutual recognition, respect, sharing and responsibility (RCAP, 1996, 1:675-697).

Each of these aspects of renewal is connected to all the others, like the four quadrants of a medicine wheel converging to form a balanced whole. Self-government will be an illusion without the resources and economic base to support it. Economic self-reliance requires healthy, skilled people and a fairer sharing of lands and opportunity in relation to other peoples in Canada. Healing of body, mind, feelings and spirit will liberate people to become self-determining and self-reliant, but the path to healing will not be easy to follow unless decision-making and resources are brought under Aboriginal control. The challenge set out by RCAP is not only to recognize the interdependence between the elements of renewal, but also to set in motion dynamic, synergistic change, so that a positive cycle of development occurs. RCAP calls for a twenty-year commitment to renewal, to be launched by a royal proclamation and companion legislation marking clear pathways to change (RCAP, 1996, 5:20-21).

Lifelong Holistic Education

Education has a central role to play in translating the Commission's visionary recommendations into reality. Education goes by different names. When we speak of movement toward self-government we call it "capacity-building." When we discuss economic development we use the terms "human resource development" or "training." When we set out to change attitudes and perceptions that shape relations between peoples, we speak of "public education," and when we consider the responsibility of preparing the next generation to be contributing members of the community, we use the term "education" or "schooling." Aboriginal people speak of education as a lifelong, holistic process that begins while a child is still in the womb and continues so long as a person draws breath, encompassing all those learnings that we need to live long and well on Mother Earth (Castellano et al., 2000:1).

Education, in this comprehensive sense, is woven through every section of the RCAP Report. As the Commission addressed means of implementing its agenda for change, it articulated the knowledge, attitudes and skills required to renew the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Education and Self-Government

The Commission concluded that all Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples, have a right of self-determination that is founded in emerging norms of international law, recognized in historic treaties and protected by the Canadian Constitution. By virtue of this right, Aboriginal peoples are entitled to negotiate freely the terms of their relationship with Canada and to establish governmental structures that they consider appropriate for their needs (RCAP, 1996, 2:173). The right of self-determination, and its expression in self-government, is vested in nations rather than individual communities or administrative units under the *Indian Act*, a nation being defined as "a sizeable body of Aboriginal people with a shared sense of national identity that constitutes the predominant population in a certain territory or collection of territories" (RCAP, 1996, 2:178).

The Commission states firmly that Aboriginal nations can exercise their inherent right of self-government without consulting federal or provincial authorities. However, agreement between neighbouring governments is the preferred route. While self-government arrangements are being worked out, the Commission urges federal, provincial and territorial governments to move promptly to acknowledge the jurisdiction of Aboriginal nations. This would open the way to self-starting Aboriginal initiatives, greater flexibility in the interpretation of existing law, recognition of the capacity of off-reserve organizations to act on behalf of their membership, and making fiscal arrangements between Aboriginal and Canadian governments commensurate with the responsibilities undertaken.

Education is implicated as a consequence of self-government and as an essential support to its attainment. It is identified by the Commission as a core area of jurisdiction within which Aboriginal nations can exercise their inherent right. However, education reform should not be delayed while full self-government is being negotiated. Recommendations are designed to be implemented under present federal, provincial and territorial law, or in the transition to self-government, or under Aboriginal self-government.

Citing research from the Yukon and, as of 1996, the anticipated territory of Nunavut, the Commission noted that training provisions in claims processes were typically scheduled to take effect once agreements were concluded, a timetable that was inadequate to meet the explosive demands for trained personnel that were in prospect. In the territories, examination of existing and anticipated jobs indicated that high school and college programs might serve to fill administrative support positions in organizations involved in implementing self-government, but there was an urgent need to train program administrators, senior executives and other professionals. Preparation of community members to serve on boards and committees directing implementation of agreements was also essential. The Commission concluded that education for self-government had to be addressed to two distinct groups: those currently employed in local administration and regional organizations, and a large population of youth who would be entering the labour force in the next two decades. These groups have distinct, sometimes overlapping, educational needs which include on-the-job training, professional development, job leaves, distance education and in-community study opportunities, as well as more conventional methods of education in regional and urban centres. Students require adequate financial support for academic and subsistence needs, including family responsibilities. On the delivery side, it cannot be assumed that Aboriginal self-government jobs will be identical to those in other government organizations. Adapted training programs will be required. One-stop funding mechanisms for education and training were recommended to replace the fragmented approach of program funding involving multiple government departments and programs, each with its own mandate and guidelines.

Education for Economic Self-reliance

The skills required for participation in a rapidly changing, global economy are key ingredients in a strategy of economic renewal and increased self-reliance for Aboriginal nations and their communities. The Aboriginal population is young and growing rapidly. 1991 census figures indicated that 56 per cent of the Aboriginal population was under 24 years of age, compared with 35 per cent of the general population. With thousands of new entrants to the labour force each year, the Commission estimated that just under 225,000 jobs would have to be created to accommodate the rapidly growing labour force over the next 20 years. In addition, there is a large gap in unemployment rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. To bridge this gap, another 82,400 jobs would be needed yielding an overall additional requirement of 307,300 jobs in the period 1991-2016 to achieve equitable levels of employment for Aboriginal people relative to Canadian employment norms (RCAP, 1996, 2:931).

The Commission sets out a multi-pronged economic development strategy that includes entrepreneurship, circulation of economic benefits within local Aboriginal communities, and support of mixed economies that recognize the contribution of harvesting activities on traditional lands. Self-government will open job opportunities, as already noted, and land claims settlements that provide an infusion of capital and royalty payments for resource development that will boost Aboriginal economies in some regions. However, the vast majority of the new jobs required will have to be found in the labour market. It is estimated that nearly half (45 per cent) of new jobs being created will require post-secondary education (HRDC, 1994).

The absolute numbers of Aboriginal youth graduating from secondary school and continuing to post-secondary education have increased in the present generation. Significant numbers of adults are returning to school as highly motivated mature learners who achieve good success rates. 1996 census figures reveal that education levels of Aboriginal people are rising, but attainment in the general Canadian population is rising faster. Between 1981 and 1996, the proportion of Aboriginal people with university degrees rose from 2.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent. In the same period, the proportion of non-Aboriginal people holding degrees rose from 9.9 per cent to 15.6 per cent, increasing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal attainment from 7 per cent to 11 per cent. Increasing disparity is similarly found in completions of technical and college programs. Aboriginal completions have remained steady at around 12.5 per cent, while non-Aboriginal completions have risen from 19.8 per cent in 1986 to 24.5 per cent in 1996 (Statistics Canada in Castellano et al., 2000: 225).

As a central component of its employment development strategy RCAP recommended that:

Federal and provincial governments fund a major 10-year initiative for employment development and training that is:

- aimed at preparing Aboriginal people for much greater participation in emerging employment opportunities;
- sponsored by Aboriginal nations or regionally-based Aboriginal institutions;
- developed in collaboration with public and private sector employers and educational and training institutions; and
- mandatory for public sector employers.

The initiative would include:

- identification of future employment growth by sector;
- classroom and on-the-job training for emerging employment opportunities;
- term employment with participating employers; and
- permanent employment based on merit.

Education and Healing

Healing is a term often used by Aboriginal people to signify the restoration of physical, social, emotional and spiritual vitality in individuals and social systems. It echoes, in many ways, the concept of continuous growth and learning implied in holistic education. Chief Gordon Peters, speaking to the Commission described it thus:

> Across the board a lot is going on right now. It is given different names and takes shape in different circumstances. Some call it healing; some call it regeneration. No matter what it is called, it is the same process – people taking control of their individual lives (RCAP Hearings: Toronto, 18 November 1993).

In Volume 2: *Gathering Strength*, the RCAP Report documents the numerous accomplishments of reform efforts in Aboriginal education in the years since the milestone paper *Indian Control of Indian Education* was published (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972). First Nations and Inuit parents and communities have assumed control of local school administration and influenced the content of curriculum, although standard provincial curricula still dominate in federal or First Nation schools. Aboriginal teacher education programs have gained support and have increased the number of Aboriginal teachers, but the gains have largely been confined to representation in elementary schools. Provincial education ministries and school boards have developed programs to make provincial and local institutions more welcoming and responsive to Aboriginal participation. Tribal councils and regional governments are assuming responsibility for policy and planning in education. Aboriginal institutions across Canada offer adult and post-secondary programs, mostly through affiliation agreements with provincial colleges and universities, producing outstanding results in student retention, graduation rates and subsequent employment (RCAP, 1996, 3:561).

All of these changes are welcome but they fall short of the efforts necessary to narrow the gap between the educational attainment of Aboriginal people and that of others in Canada. As the skill requirements of a post-industrial, globalized economy rise, there is the serious and disturbing prospect that the marginalization, poverty and relative disadvantage of Aboriginal people will worsen.

The 44 recommendations in the Education chapter of Volume 3 touch on education strategies for children, youth, adults and Elders. They place strong emphasis on early childhood education, making available high quality, culturally appropriate, early childhood education guided by parental and community choice. Recommendations on elementary and secondary schooling echo recommendations from reports written over the past 25 years. They are directed to both Aboriginal schools on reserve and provincial schools, which 80 per cent of Aboriginal students are estimated to attend. They emphasize Aboriginal involvement in governance of education whether on reserve or in cities and towns, the development of culturally appropriate curriculum, expansion of Aboriginal teacher training, and recognition of the importance of conserving and revitalizing Aboriginal languages.

A recommendation on education to empower Aboriginal youth illustrates the attention given to detailing implementation strategies:

> The Commission recommends that:
>
> Aboriginally controlled, provincial, and territorial schools serving Aboriginal youth develop and implement comprehensive Aboriginal youth empowerment strategies with elements elaborated in collaboration with youth, including:
>
> (a) cultural education in classroom and informal settings;
> (b) acknowledgement of spiritual, ethical and intuitive dimensions of learning;
> (c) education to support critical analysis of Aboriginal experience;
> (d) learning as a means of healing from the effects of trauma, abuse and racism;
> (e) academic skills development and support;
> (f) sports and outdoor education;
> (g) leadership development; and
> (h) youth exchanges between Aboriginal nations, across Canada and

internationally (RCAP, 1996, 3:485).

The major recommendations for adult and post-secondary education focus on bringing stable, adequate funding and credential-granting mandates to Aboriginal post-secondary institutions which now struggle for resources on the fringes of provincial college and university systems. An Aboriginal Peoples' International University is proposed to link regional efforts, develop accreditation criteria, and provide a focus for negotiating recognition of credentials by mainstream institutions.

Recommendations on Elders in education reiterate recommendations of past reports on engaging them in appropriate ways in youth education. Support for exchanges between Elders from different locations and traditions, and dialogue with mainstream scholars is also supported.

The central thrust of the RCAP recommendations on education is that federal, provincial and territorial governments should acknowledge that education is a core area for the exercise of Aboriginal self-government, and that they should collaborate with Aboriginal governments, organizations or education authorities, as appropriate, to support the development of Aboriginally controlled education systems, with funding commensurate with the responsibilities assumed (RCAP, 1996, 3:444). Enlarging the space for Aboriginal initiatives and stabilizing support for Aboriginal institutions will, in turn, influence the quality and effectiveness of education that will continue to be provided by provincial and territorial institutions, offering models and benchmarks for institutional performance.

Public Education for a Renewed Relationship

In putting forward its challenge to renew the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, the Commission wrote:

> We have no illusions about the difficulties standing in the way of negotiations to renew the relationship. Efforts at reform, whether in political relationships or social policies over the past 25 years, have failed repeatedly to effect substantial change....
>
> How do participants move away from a relationship characterized by disparity in power, violations of trust, and lingering, unresolved disputes? How do they move toward a relationship of power sharing, mutual respect, and joint problem solving?
>
> It is our conviction that appreciation of the distinctive place that Aboriginal nations occupy in the Canadian federation, and of the mutual, continuing responsibilities engendered by that relationship, must permeate Canadian intellectual and ceremonial life (RCAP, 1996, 1:6,7,8).

The first initiative proposed by the Commission to transform the relationship was a royal proclamation acknowledging the errors of past treatment of Aboriginal peoples and making a commitment to embark on a new path. The proclamation would be accompanied by legislation to give substance institutionally to new forms of relationship in new and renovated treaties and accords, and nation-to-nation transactions. However, change in a democratic society does not come about by government fiat. To be sustained, change in public policy must be supported by public awareness and endorsement of the path taken.

Throughout its life, the Commission made public communication of its mission and activities a priority. In Volume 5: *Renewal: A Twenty-Year Commitment,* it set out a program of public education that included: a task force to communicate findings and promote study and implementation of the Report; distribution of the CD-ROM *For Seven Generations, An Information Legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP 1997); greater acknowledgement of Aboriginal place names, languages, ceremonies and historic sites in public life; and making public education an integral part of all programs that affect Aboriginal people. An aspect of public education given particular emphasis in the body of the Report was dissemination of the concepts that treaties with Aboriginal nations are fundamental to the make-up of Canada and that their fulfillment is a test of Canada's honour and place of respect in the family of nations. Another recommendation was for the establishment of an Aboriginal Peoples Review Commission that would provide a mechanism for governments to evaluate progress in implementing the recommendations of RCAP and establish a means of reporting to the public on actions and effectiveness in achieving a new relationship.

Responses to RCAP

Aboriginal organizations generally made positive responses to the RCAP Report, though they reserved the right to study and adapt recommendations to their own circumstances and their self-defined priorities. The initial response of the federal government was decidedly cool. The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) in 1996, the Honourable Ron Irwin, judged the overall recommendations too costly and indicated that his department was already working on specific issues identified in the Report. Minister Jane Stewart, who assumed the portfolio after the federal election in June 1997, was more positive. In various venues she acknowledged the profound challenge put forward by the Commission:

> We first need to understand that, over and above hundreds of individual recommendations, the Commissioners directed us to examine the very core of how we have lived together in this country (Stewart, 1998:2).

Gathering Strength - Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan

In January 1998, the Government of Canada made a formal ceremonial response to the RCAP Report. It began with a Statement of Reconciliation in which Minister Stewart, on behalf of the government, expressed to all Aboriginal people in Canada "profound regret for past actions of the federal government which have contributed to these difficult pages in the history of our relationship together." To those who suffered sexual and physical abuse at residential schools, the Minister declared: "We are deeply sorry." The statement also expressed the intention to "find ways in which Aboriginal people can participate fully in the economic, political, cultural and social life of Canada in a manner which preserves and enhances the collective identities of Aboriginal communities, and allows them to evolve and flourish in the future" (Canada, 1998).

The policy statement released at the same time was titled "*Gathering Strength – Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan.*" It committed the Government of Canada to renew the partnership to better the lives of Aboriginal people in Canada; to strengthen Aboriginal governance so that communities can exercise their inherent right of self-government; to design a new fiscal relationship to provide a stable flow of funds in support of community development; and to sustain the growth of strong, healthy Aboriginal communities through economic development, infrastructure and services. In addition to the foregoing statements of regret and future intent, the one substantive commitment announced at the time was a fund in the amount of $350 million to promote healing of the legacy of physical and sexual abuse at residential schools (Stewart, 1998:5).

Closely paralleling the commitments in *Gathering Strength* was the *Agenda for Action with First Nations* developed in consultation between INAC and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), also released in January 1998. The latter document has provided a framework for a working partnership over the subsequent two years.

Searching for Signs of Change

Three years have passed since release of the RCAP Report. Has it made a difference? There is evidence that the Report has exerted significant influence on relations between the federal government and First Nations' organizations, particularly the AFN. Inuit self-government gained prominence in 1999 with the creation of

Nunavut, a development that proceeded relatively independent of RCAP recommendations. The Metis and Aboriginal people living off-reserve report little progress in their efforts to gain recognition of their distinctive status, historic claims and service needs (Castellano, 1999:107).

The following comments focus on education initiatives specific to First Nations, in part because this is the arena where I have had some involvement, but also because this is where government follow-up of the RCAP Report has been focussed.

In an overview of policy discourse on Aboriginal affairs from1965 to 1992, Graham et al. (1996) concluded:

> The federal government is still the dominant power in the government/Aboriginal relationship. What means do Aboriginal peoples have to initiate dialogue that would compel governments to participate? The controlling party can choose who participates, how they participate, and what options are available ... Aboriginal groups are left to react to, and cope with, this process, recommend changes that the government is in no way compelled to consider, and, if time and money permit, seek redress through the courts (pp. 349-350).

Measures led or supported by government to implement RCAP's recommendations on education and the commitments in principle set out in *Gathering Strength* and the *Agenda for Action* have been extremely modest. In 1998-99, $8 million was earmarked to support goals congruent with RCAP recommendations for child and youth education. On AFN's recommendation, the entire amount was directed to regional activities. Funds were accessed through competitive proposal submissions, in which 38 proposals were successful. $26 million was allocated in 1999-2000, again accessed in the regions through a proposal submission process. In 2000-2001, the budget will rise to $40 million and INAC and AFN will engage in dialogue to consider alternative options for distribution (Tremblay, 1999:7). Delivery costs of elementary, secondary and post-secondary education operations are budgeted separately, totaling $1.263 billion which is 29 per cent of INAC's budget of $4.387 billion for the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program in 1999-2000 (INAC, 1999).

In effect, response to RCAP recommendations for system change in education has been relegated to the status of a departmental program with a modest budget, accessible to a small number of First Nation communities. In contrast, the agenda for change mandated by resolution of Assembly of First Nations chiefs continues to press for legislation recognizing First Nations jurisdiction, funding allocations consistent with population growth, systematic planning to address unmet needs for special education of

First Nations students, and accreditation of First Nation post-secondary institutions. In advocating for system change, AFN chiefs consistently cite RCAP recommendations to support their position (AFN 1998).

Federal initiatives relating to First Nations are proceeding in other departments as well. The Head Start program incorporating early childhood education is sponsored by Health Canada; a Youth Employment Strategy and adult training are provided through Human Resources Development Canada; and $20 million has been allocated by Heritage Canada over four years, beginning in 1998-99, to maintain and revitalize Aboriginal languages.

In virtually all program areas affecting First Nations, the AFN is involved in consultations on policy although program decisions, such as those that require competitive proposals from First Nations communities and regional organizations for limited funds, may be problematic for AFN. Further, when incremental funding for *Gathering Strength* initiatives is fixed on an annual basis, AFN must make difficult choices internally. As a staff member pointed out: "If we press too hard for education priorities, it may mean that something equally important, like housing, loses" (Paulette Tremblay, Personal Communication).

A performance report published on the Internet by INAC stresses "partnership based on mutual respect and recognition, responsibility and sharing." The establishment of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to deal with the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in residential schools and an Aboriginal language program are cited, but the contours of "a public education campaign to teach all Canadians about Aboriginal culture and history" and "a capacity-building program to help Aboriginal organizations" remain vague (INAC 1999). An analysis by Fred Wien (1999) of initiatives in the area of economic development, including training, concluded that "the scale of the effort is not commensurate with the dimensions of the issue or with the Commission's recommendations" (p. 269).

Conclusion

It should be evident from this brief review that the education recommendations of the RCAP Report have not achieved a high priority either in federal government response to the Report, or in public lobbying by representative Aboriginal organizations, despite the fact that education of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is pivotal to the achievement of goals in every sector. Developments in treaty negotiations in British Columbia and the announcement of private sector participation in a Human Resources

Development Council have had a higher profile. The plight of homeless Aboriginal people and, shamefully, news of abuses of Aboriginal human rights by police have captured the attention of the media at least briefly, but inertia in the large, expensive Aboriginal education machine has not generated the outrage or shame that seems necessary to trigger movement.

There are larger numbers of Aboriginal educators than ever before, and more Aboriginal students attaining higher education and professional qualifications, but the gap between poor and rich, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educational levels grows wider. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples has dissolved, its mandate completed. Aboriginal organizations labour on, bringing the issues of their constituencies before governments who weigh their requests in the light of conservative fiscal priorities. And it is left to citizens of good will to hold governments to their public commitments to a partnership with Aboriginal peoples based on mutual respect and recognition, responsibility and sharing.

I am pleased to have been a part of the Summer Institute, Voice of the Drum, which has served to disseminate knowledge of the mutual benefits of such a partnership of peoples and to reinforce the commitment of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens, in Canada and abroad, to make that partnership a reality.

[1] This article is a revised and updated version of a presentation at the Summer Institute - Voice of the Drum. The author served as Co-Director of Research with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

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Declaration
Affirming the Principles For Indigenous Education and Self Government

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The assembled circle of delegates to the 1998 International Summer Institute, Voice of the Drum, that linked elders, scholars, educators, education authorities and Aboriginal communities affirms the following principles with respect to the educational interests of Indigenous peoples:

Bearing in mind that for Indigenous peoples to realize their fundamental human rights and aspirations to become the architects of their own future, the world community must understand our experiences with colonialism, its tragic effects and continuing legacy of fear and pain;

Bearing in mind that words alone are not enough to end colonialization, or to contribute to positive, long term changes of Indigenous education;

Bearing in mind that Indigenous peoples have declared that enough is enough;

Recognizing that colonialism is a disease that has infected the environment, human body, mind and spirit in multiple symptoms;

Also recognizing that colonialism is manifested within brutal dehumanizing forms of intolerance, domination, and oppression;

Recognizing that cultural and multicultural education does engage questions of power and racism in interpersonal and institutional contexts;

Affirming the importance of consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples in solving the existing fragmented problems they face in areas of human rights, environment, development, education, housing and health;

Recognizing that partnership in action is integral to the process of such planning and implementation of the program of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples;

Recognizing the crucial importance of the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Decade to eradicating the severe and widespread poverty afflicting Indigenous peoples around the earth. Further, that this poverty has deprived them of their world view, their right to be, and other human rights and fundamental freedoms; all resulting from colonization, its educational system, and dispossession of their land;

Authenticating the empowerment of Indigenous peoples to make choices that enable them to retain their ecological world view and all its manifestations while participating in political, economic and social life, with full respect for their cultural values, languages, traditions, and forms of social organization.

EASTERN DOOR: SELF-DETERMINATION

1. Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination as defined by the United Nations *Human Rights Covenants,* as well as their numerous treaties and agreements that were concluded with the Crown according to their original spirit and intent.

2. Indigenous peoples have the right to expect that governments, education authorities, corporations, and bureaucracies respect those human rights and treaties.

3. By virtue of our existing right of self-determination, Indigenous peoples have the responsibility to promote, develop, and maintain their order and laws and to determine their political status and to freely pursue their cultural destiny, and social and economic development.

4. By virtue of our existing human right of self-determination, Indigenous peoples have the responsibility to realize the ILO Convention concerning *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries 1989*, the 1995 *Declaration on Indigenous Rights* of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the *Principles and Guidelines for Protecting the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples*, and related declarations by Indigenous peoples.

5. By virtue of our existing human right of self-determination,Indigenous peoples have the fundamental human responsibilities to have the dignity and diversity of their world views, languages, traditions, gender, and aspirations appropriately reflected in all aspects of their self-determination and education.

SOUTHERN DOOR: RENEWING OUR EARTH

1. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to restore, maintain and strengthen their relationship with the mother earth in accordance with the lessons of the medicine wheel and in accordance with their responsibilities to future generations. These world views are an ecological order and the foundation of our humanity and civilization.

2. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to the restoration and protection of the total environment and the productive capacity of their lands, territories, and resources.

3. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to their traditional knowledge, including the right to protect and develop their knowledge of plants, animals, and minerals.

4. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to control, protect, and develop their spiritual, cultural and intellectual heritage and property.

WESTERN DOOR: RESTORING OUR CIVILIZATION

1. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility to restore, maintain and strengthen their civilizations and their humanity through their own institutions and systems.

2. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to belong to an Indigenous civilization or nation, in accordance with their traditions and ceremonies.

3. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to restore, manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual consciousness, traditions, customs and ceremonies.

4. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility for the collective right to restore, maintain, and develop the distinct spiritual standards that inform their language, culture, gender, economic, social, and psychological and political characteristics.

5. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to practice and revitalize their world view, languages, traditions and customs.

6. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to their heritage and knowledge. This includes the capacity to restore, maintain, protect and strengthen the past, present and future manifestations of their creativity, knowledge and skills.

7. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to restore, revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their languages, oral traditions, philosophy, knowledge, writing systems and literature, and their history and visions.

8. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to reform, designate and retain their own names for the land, knowledge, communities, places and persons.

9. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility to learn their world view, language, and consciousness. Included with this responsibility is the right to establish and control their education systems and learning traditions based on their world view, language, consciousness and aspirations.

10. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to restore, maintain, and develop their own civilization in accordance with their own traditions and ceremonies.

11. Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to formulate, choose and implement their priorities and strategies for exercising their rights to safety, comfort and development.

12. Indigenous people are entitled to maintain and reinforce their Indigenous order within the international and national legal systems. This includes the observance of Indigenous law and custom, Aboriginal and treaty rights, and the use of Indigenous languages and ceremonies. They must have the right to apply these specified rights to matters within and between their communities and in disputes with neighbors to maintain harmony, peace and good order.

NORTHERN DOOR: PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

1. To ensure the responsibilities and rights of Indigenous peoples, if they so choose, Indigenous peoples have the right to effective participation in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the artificial modern State, the United Nations system, educational system and school boards, and corporations.

2. The United Nations, States, corporations, educational institutions and public school boards, and other entities must respect and affirm that Indigenous peoples have the right to effective participation in all levels of decision-making in matters that may affect their responsibilities and rights, lives and destinies through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own traditions and ceremonies.

3. The United Nations, States, corporations, churches, educational institutions and public school boards, and other entities must respect the integrity of the world view, language, tradition and ceremony of each Indigenous peoples and their right to sustain them in all situations and in all media.

4. The United Nations, States, corporations, churches, educational institutions and school boards, and other entities must respect Indigenous people's right to liberty of conscience, their freedom of spiritual practices, and sacred world view. They must take necessary and affirmative measures to ensure that no attempts are made to interfere with this freedom, or convert them to other religions or to impose on them other beliefs against the will of the community.

5. The United Nations, States, corporations, churches and educational institutions and school boards, and other entities must take effective and urgent measures to guarantee to Indigenous peoples the right to maintain and strengthen their families, traditions, and ceremony through both Indigenous law and public law in an inclusionary legal system.

6. The United Nations, States, corporations, churches, educational institutions and school boards, and other entities must take effective measures to recognize and affirm that Indigenous legal orders are an integral part of the international and national legal system and the framework in which Indigenous development takes place.

7. The United Nations, States, corporations, churches, educational institutions and school boards, and other entities must take effective measures to recognize and affirm Indigenous medicine, pharmacology, health practices and promotion, including preventive and rehabilitative practices, without limiting access to all other health institutions, services and medical care that ensures adequate health services.

RESPECTFULLY ENDORSED BY VOTE AND CONSENSUS of the Delegates, July 16, 1998 at noon.

Elder's Comments

Ed Onabigon
Talk transcribed by Roger Neil

Thunder Bay, Ontario
February 25 & 26, 2000

I'm grateful for us choosing this nice spot here on the Fort William Reserve, by the causeway, just looking over the lake – all this beauty that the Creator has given us, Lake Superior. Looking out to the southwest, there's this big island.

(Looking at this book) I like what Marie Eshkibok-Trudeau had to say, where she was relating everything to the circle, which is so much a part of our Anishnabe way. For us, really, to be part of the education system, we have to own the curriculum. One way of doing this is following the principles and guidelines of the circle. Also, the seven virtues are very important. You know, when some of my siblings were being born, and nieces and nephews, the umbilical cord would be saved, to respect our connection to our parents, as well as our connection to the Creator. Eventually, this would be given back to the earth. That cradleboard would be a place where the child learned – learned by watching everything that went on around he or she. Our first school, first education, comes from being in the cradlelboard, like the security of the womb. You would still have that secureness. And babies would have wrappings to sleep in; they would feel protected. If we would start fashioning our education system on the basics of the original circle teachings of the Anishnabe people (it would be good).

Ask the Elders to show you the old ways, and adapt the principles that we had way back when. Even our Native traditions and culture are forever changing. It's fine that we do the ceremonies, but we have changed, so we have to adapt; at the same time, never forgetting where we come from. Respect, truth, honesty, all the good seven teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, Grandmothers – with them, we remember our basic connection to the Creator and his creation. This is the way it has to be. Just like those trees, look at them, there's maybe fifty, sixty plants right in front of us. But they're all connected, they're all reaching out, and they never have to worry, they're each doing their job. So is each and every one of those blades of grass – they're unique, they're all unique. If you take any two, they're not exactly the same, just as with people. That shows us the harmony and balance, and that they adapt to their environment. Man and woman have to do the same thing, adapt and see our connection to everything around us.

(Regarding suffering and healing related to education) The thing is, we have to grow out of that, we have to seek that healing. In my case, I went through racism, alcoholism, low self-worth; I didn't respect myself as a person. It wasn't until I started going back and trying to find my roots, to find out who I was as an Anishnabe man, that I finally began to appreciate what is here. I saw what non-Native society seemed to have; I tried to chase that dream, but it wasn't my dream. But once I got serious and got to appreciate myself as an Anishnabe person, I found an inner peace in being Ed Onabigon, an Anishnabe man ... a good person, and able to love myself. Then, I was able to teach people the little bit that I know about the circle of life. Today, right now, it is really a beautiful circle. I know my connection to everyone around me. I'm beginning to reclaim my language, my Ojibwayness, my family. We are becoming whole.

It shows me that I'm on the right track when I can make a difference in people's lives ... just caring for people and sharing with them, sharing whatever I have with them that'll help to make their day. The main thing is to become whole.

(Regarding having a dream and necessary sacrifice) Day by day, there's surrendering of self, just to surrender. In the past, I had my own little way of seeing, just like a horse when they have blinders on. I saw what I wanted to see, not how I should or could be. The way I surrendered that, and continue to surrender that to our Creator, to wholeness and to health – the more I get lifted up and feel connected to other people. Some old people, you can see that around them, they're just so peaceful and serene. Just like some of the great people like Mother Theresa, Ghandi, some Elders that you might meet when you're travelling around – you can actually see their goodness. I would like to have just a bit of what they have, so I could be remembered for the good things that I've done, what I've contributed to society: the sweatlodge, the circles, the ceremonies and so forth. Just being a good neighbour/citizen, walking in kindness. You know the Creator is kind; he's been kind to both of us, since we first sundanced together at Heron Bay.

(Regarding adolescents) They're just testing the water, trying to become their own people, their own selves. One teenager that adopted me wanted to stay with me; I just stuck by her, just as I learned from my mother and dad when I was going through that period. They just stood by me; no matter what I did, they would be so kind. Even if I was stuck somewhere a hundred miles away, they'd send me bus fare or train fare, "c'mon home." By being kind and supporting that youngster who adopted me, no matter how angry I was at her actions, I just remembered how my parents treated me when I was becoming independent. Just continue to support and love your kids no matter what, you've just got to take care of them. And, of course, as you go along, you're trying to be a good example to them, to provide good life skills.

(Looking over a life of learning) The biggest thing is probably when I hit the bottom, really felt hopeless, contemplated jumping off a train bridge ... it was from that point that I really started looking for "Anishnabe Eddy," who I really am. Then, I started offering tobacco, attending ceremonies, started working at finding out who I really was. The first time I was out in the bush, in the middle of nowhere, looking for a place to offer my tobacco, I still made sure no one was around watching me. It's amazing from a small beginning, from seeking help, how much can come to us. You pick up teachings here and there; you know when lightning arrives the first time in the year, offer tobacco. I did that, and later dreams came to help teach me. Then, every chance I got, I'd listen to Elders' teachings, and then, the pipe teaches you. I had one dream in which I knew I had permission to start using the pipe. The hand-drum, the traditional big drum, the water drum here – they're all gifts I carry now. Not for me, but these gifts are carried for the community and to make the circle strong. The medicines are not for personal use, but always to serve the people. The Anishnabe word for this is "helper" – to live with these gifts in simplicity and humility. The Creator and the spirit helpers are what make the ceremonies so spiritual, so full of life.

The drum is the heartbeat of the earth, the drum is the pulse of the Creator, the heartbeat of the Creator, it's all that. When we're first conceived in our mother's womb, we are listening to the heartbeat of the drum. It can continue on through our lives. When you attend ceremonies and you hear that drum, you feel that life, that energy, of the Creator filling the place. I attend mass too, and I get healing from my religion too, especially the teachings of Christ. He reminds us that we are one spirit in God. I've never seen anywhere where He says our culture is bad. Had the missionaries adapted their teachings to what was already here in the territory, there wouldn't have been the fear element. They had nothing good to say about the fine values we already had. Had they really, truly been living Christian values, then none of this poverty and hopelessness in Native communities would have happened. We would have been included from day one as partners with the European people. Anishnabe teachings of the drum, the teachings of the pipe, the teachings of our ancestors – always teach us the oneness of all creation with the Creator. It is the same teaching.

When the Europeans first came over here, they held out basically the same teachings as we already had – this is why we embraced them as brothers and sisters. But, they didn't see that that was true; their attitude was "In the name of God, your culture is wrong; in the name of God, you're pagans." But this was never so in our culture. We knew where we were in the order of Creation. This is why, now, no culture should be turned away from our Native ceremonies; otherwise, we are turning away one of God's people from the ceremony – and that would no longer be a sacred circle. The circle represents all people. Keep it whole, always whole. With that, it's good to be alive, it's good to share that.

We're all working to restore the balance on this earth, the harmony. This is what the teachings are: balance, harmony, life. The main thing is that we have to be kind. The word for "the Creator" in Ojibway is "Gishé Manido" – the literal translation is "kind Creator." In order for us to do the Creator's will, we have to be kind, kind to each other. Then all other things come: the respect, the truth, the honesty, the whole seven teachings of the Grandfathers. We have to learn from creation. Learn to respect the trees, the fish, the air, the fire, all the elements – they're all a part of us. We have to take care of things. Everything is given to us to sustain life ... the spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, all of these have to be in balance in order to live a good life.

Sure, there's storms in life, cloudy periods. We have to expect some hardships, but persevere and live through them because we know the sun will break through. Without overanalyzing things, without always trying to figure things out, if you keep things simple, the Creator works with you. Ever since I started having circles at the Homeless Centre, there's already people who have reclaimed their life and are moving on. That's the least I can do – pass that hope on.

(Regarding fear of the occult or bad medicine) If you buy into some fundamentalist views, that things are one way and that's it, then, naturally, fear is going to start coming in. Don't allow fear to come in. If you really look at everything that's here on this earth, it was made by the Creator, and the Creator made all things good. So the only bad medicine is our allowing fear to take over – this is where bad medicine comes in. If you let that grow in your mind, then, pretty soon, it overwhelms you. Look into your heart, that's where the Creator is, look to see everything around you from there. This is where respect comes in too – you would choose the medicines that give life. Whatever you move out of its place, use it in a good way. Bad medicine is only in the mind, it can be overwhelming, but it is not a part of the spirit. Respect yourself, and trust in the Creator.

(Concluding) We have to realize that we have a lot to offer, once we know who we are as First People, what our values are through the traditions. A lot of it is alive. The traditions are there and will remain forever. Our respect for the land ... never kill anything unless you need it, don't waste. All the years I trapped with my Dad, we could go back year after year. Each family of beaver would supply us with one or two beaver, what they could spare. There, we respect the spirit of the animals that we use to keep us living. There is interference, like in the case of our trapline. My father had taken care to preserve the trapline so we could go back year after year, and a big family surviving on that. The government of Ontario, in its wisdom, brought in trappers from another area one year that my Dad was sick, and these men cleaned out the whole trapline. Thirty years later, it's just beginning to regenerate. They should have respected that land and not drained it out. Had it not been for the values taught to me by my parents, there could have been violence there. Really, every species has their part to play in the whole world. But that isn't book knowledge, it's knowledge that you learn from the heart, and from observation. It's up to each individual to search out and find your place in creation, to earn your knowledge, to earn respect.

One More Thing

An Anonymous Participant of the International Summer Institute

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Voice of the Drum

Know that all of the memories are alive,
Not one voice is lost forever
But held in the loving embrace
of our grandmothers and grandfathers:

Full waves of lightning will stream up from the rock
to join the stars with the earth ...
from the bedrock, the molten womb, the iron crystal heart
of this planet which holds all the memories of each day,
each revolution around the sun.

Somewhere deep within the earth a very old grandmother
will decide that it is time to wake us up.
She will take us in a waking dream
beside the lake, and gesture to the granite floor,
and the floodgates will open.

Every language and image and sign will flicker
from the rocky vault of the Canadian shield into the night sky,
and we will remember who we really are
We will speak with the tongues of our
great grandparents, and see with their eyes.
In humility, there will be joy and even
silly laughter, to see the sadness and
worry evaporate in the twinkling light
of the stars.

In a quiet place there is a woman
working with peaceful concentration upon
a deerhide.
Each crystal bead she sews upon the hide
is infused with light and as it takes shape
finds life: there are trees and people and bears,
eagles and moose and beaver. There! a beaded wolf
takes hold of its place upon the hide, and slowly
lifts its head before a moonlit beaded cedar.
Oh, there is my family's history, shaped as
it leaves the woman's hand. She is a beautiful

young woman, yet changes to a white-haired
old sister, just as a waterfall rushes over
watery rocks, she is ageless in keeping this
hide, this history.

The drum beat
steady and deeply resonant
reaches into the past, present and future:
pulsing with medicines
the drum is our heartbeat,
a golden glow that always moves
beneath the surface of all that takes place.

Everywhere there is war,
The water is angry in industry's filthy embrace.
Reptilian greed claws our children
bloody and broken from the womb
and hides on the dark side of the moon.
But streaming from the four directions,
the sky is filled with legions of thunderbirds
young and old sacrificing life
to restore peace and love.

Soon, there will be small groups
of brothers and sisters softly talking
around the fire in a tall pine forest;
And taller yet, sixty feet tall
stand their guardians:
transparent turquoise in spirit,
the guardians reach out from the root
of their three separate selves
to join in silent communion above
the treeline. They see and hear and
touch hundreds of miles around them.
They will protect each small group
around the fire.

In the second night of the sundance
The sundancer sees the same thing
with eyes open or closed:
A whirling circle of swallows
each emanating singing lights
weaving their circle, the swallows form a
window to the spirit place.
Through the window is a lovely meadow
green with summer sun
And there in the distance stands a beautiful
white buffalo grandmother.
But wait, with pounding hooves, the red-eyed
grandfather, her partner, charges the sundancer
and passes straight through into the night.

Now, with grace the lovely white buffalo
grandmother slowly approaches ...
Her turquoise eyes are deep with love and
understanding. Through her eyes and through the sacred tree,
the sundancer meets his whole family
of many past generations.
And deeper yet, through her eyes, the future.

It is the end of this world, and the beginning
of the next, all at once.
There are thousands of buffalo streaming
back to the earth,
the waves of wind from their passage
beats fire and dust into the air
Faster and faster in whirlwind force;
time passes quickly outside the
white buffalo grandmother's lodges:
Ribbed lodges wherein green fields and people still
stand protected in slow-motion harmony.

The drum is alive:
Within the drum is a young man
Who is holy and true
calling, reminding us of the seven virtues
from which all medicines stem.

One morning in late fall,
when white frost crackles
upon the garden path;
Two cranes stand tall:
As the old crane moves his head
the traveller's gaze is also moved
toward a bench in the cool
sunlight
at the end of the garden
Just then, standing one-legged, the young
crane takes off.
The old crane's gaze takes in an old man
on the bench:
He sits, offering tobacco, a bright copper bracelet
motioning ... come here.
Our foreheads touch, we breathe the same air,
And as our foreheads meet
This world dissolves in golden light and love.
Love is a place, a home.

Another day, we may find ourself
walking within a peaceful summer forest:
Each flower, each plant, every blade of grass
is vibrant, breathing in
the happy air that dances round us.

Oh, there seems to be a path,
some deer may pass this way,
Everything is so fresh and glistening,
We may have never felt so alive
so full of life ...
then arriving at a river,
the path ends.
There is a wooden bridge arched across the river,
but upon it stands death,
our own dusty skulls forming the railings
of the bridge.
Who will dare to walk over this bridge?
Looking up, we look across the river -
It seems impossible.
There are thousands of beings, like humans
yet moving so gracefully as swans
their many transparent arms and legs
in a dance, they know we are here.

They are beings of light,
And one moves forward in greeting to the edge of the river
Whose head is brighter than a thousand suns:
then, for an instant that lasts forever
we are now on the other side of the river
we can see ourself at the edge of the
forest.
There is only one lasting emotion - compassion,
and its voice is the drum.

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